Feb. 21, 1977

THE NEW YORKER

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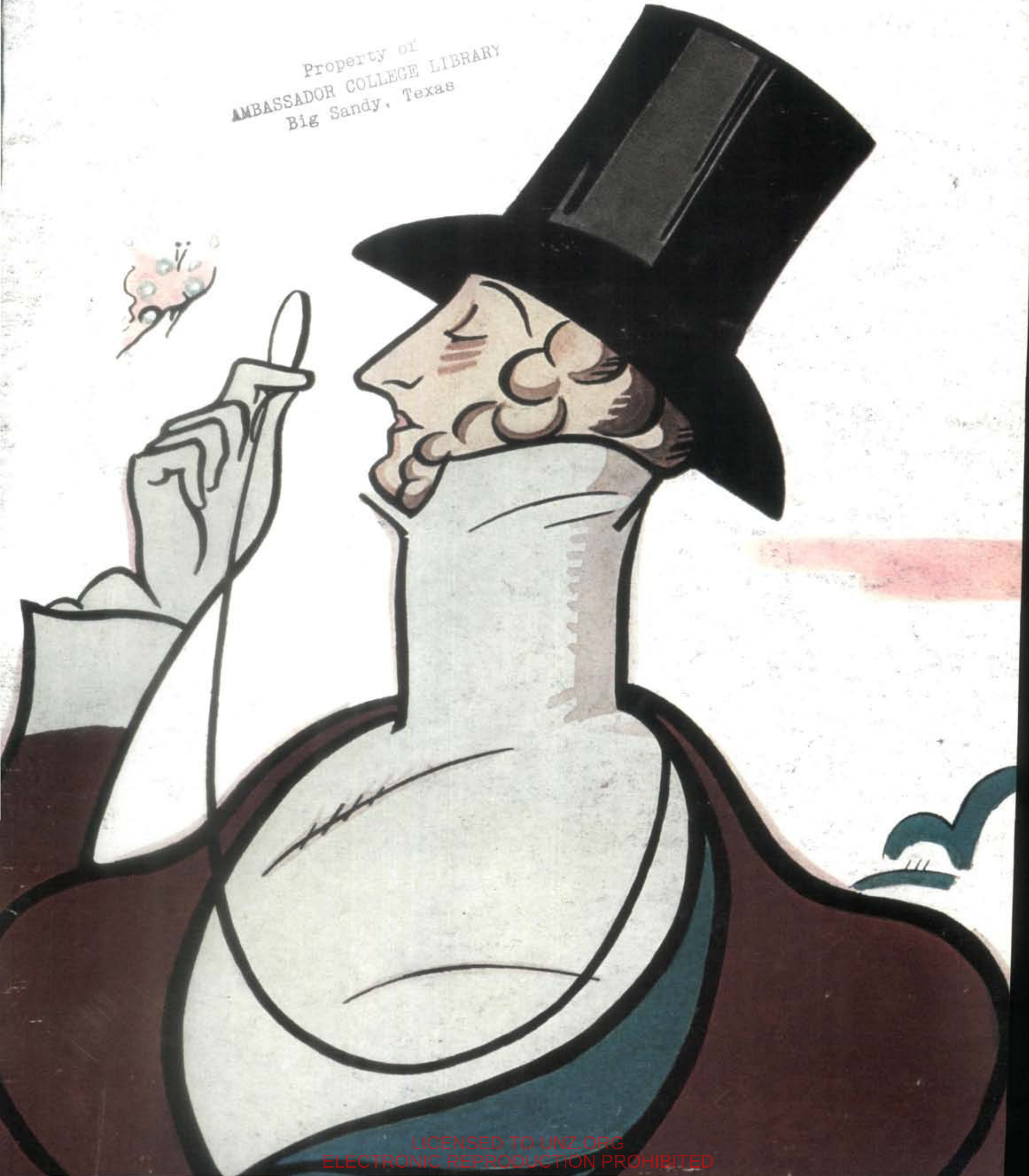

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

A CONSCIENTIOUS CALENDAR OF EVENTS OF INTEREST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			16	17	18	19
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THE THEATRE

(Next week, some theatres, as indicated below, will rearrange their schedules because of the Washington's Birthday holiday, which will be observed on Monday, Feb. 21. There may be further changes, so it would be wise to check with the newspapers before making plans.)

PLAYS AND MUSICALS

American Buffalo—A play by David Mamet, with Robert Duvall, Kenneth McMillan, and John Savage. Ulu Grosbard is the director. Opens Wednesday, Feb. 16. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 246-0390. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8; opening-night curtain at 7. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3. Special performance Sunday, Feb. 20, at 7:30.)

Ashes—This British import by David Rudkin tells of the unsuccessful efforts of a most engaging young couple first to conceive a child and later to adopt one—a sad situation, indeed, but an exhilarating play, for Mr. Rudkin is a true dramatist, who writes with feeling, wit, and style. The performances of Brian Murray and Roberta Maxwell as the husband and wife, and of John Tillinger and Penelope Allen as an assortment of other characters, are as close to perfection as makes no matter. Lynne Meadow is the excellent director. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 677-6350. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

The Brownsville Raid—Charles Fuller's strong, tragic drama (with considerable comedy and mystery as well) is based on an actual event—the dishonorable discharge, by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906, of three companies of crack, experienced black troops for purportedly shooting up the town of Brownsville, Texas. This production celebrates the tenth birthday of the Negro Ensemble Company, and Douglas Turner Ward, its artistic director, appears in the leading role. With Bill Cobbs and Graham Brown, among other good actors. (Theatre de Lys, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 8:30; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays at 3:30 and Sundays at 2:30. Closes Sunday, Feb. 27.)

Caesar and Cleopatra—Rex Harrison and Elizabeth Ashley in a limited engagement of the Shaw comedy. Ellis Rabb directed. Previews through Wednesday, Feb. 23. Opens officially on Thursday, Feb. 24. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 757-2626. Nightly, except Sundays and Monday, Feb. 21, at 8; opening-night curtain at 6:45. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2; special matinée Monday, Feb. 21, at 3.)

California Suite—Neil Simon making jokes in his wonted fashion. The setting is the Beverly Hills Hotel, where the staff is admonished not to recognize celebrities, nearly always to the celebrities' distress. The pleasing cast includes Tammy Grimes, George Grizzard, Jack Weston, and Marge Redmond. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220. Nightly, except Sundays, Thursdays, and Monday, Feb. 21, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3; special matinée Monday, Feb. 21, at 3.)

The Cherry Orchard—Chekhov's play, in a new English version by Jean-Claude van Itallie, a presentation of the New York Shakespeare Festival at Lincoln Center. Irene Worth, Marybeth Hurt, Raul Julia, Meryl Streep, and George Voskovec head a cast directed by Andrei Serban. Preview Wednesday, Feb. 16. Opens officially on Thursday, Feb. 17. (Vivian Beaumont, 150 W. 65th St. 787-8080. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30; opening-night curtain at 6:15. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 2.)

The Club—Eve Merriam's musical entertainment is set in a gentlemen's club in 1903, but the company consists of seven women, lightly disguised in top hats, white tie, and tails, who sing and dance to authentic, indelicate songs of the period. As feminist projects go, this one is unusually good-humored, and the performance—the singing, and especially the dancing—under Tommy Tune's direction is proficient and exhilarating. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330. Tuesdays, except Feb. 22, through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3; special matinée Monday, Feb. 21.)

Comedians—Milo O'Shea and the rest of a fine cast directed by Mike Nichols act out the philosophical (and political) implications of comedy, as seen by the playwright, Trevor Griffiths. A serious and funny play. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 246-4636. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, except Feb. 23, and Saturdays at 2; special matinée Monday, Feb. 21, at 2:30.)

Dirty Linen—A sometimes funny but never witty finger exercise by Tom Stoppard. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 246-6742. Nightly, except Sundays and Monday, Feb. 21, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2; special matinée Monday, Feb. 21.)

Equity Library Theatre—William Inge's COME BACK, LITTLE SHEBA is the fifth in this season's series of eight productions. (Equity Library Theatre, 103rd St. and Riverside Dr. Nightly at 8. Matinées Saturday and Sunday at 2:30. Closes Sunday, Feb. 20. For information about tickets, for which contributions are requested, call 663-2028.)

Fiddler on the Roof—Zero Mostel again playing Tevye, a part he originated shortly after the Civil War. An excellent production of a syrupy musical. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 245-4878. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Sui-

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

cide: When the Rainbow Is Enuf—The marvellous poems and prose of an American writer, Ntozake Shange, are spoken and danced to by seven remarkably gifted young black women. The result is an evening of great beauty, humor, and dramatic strength, for which the director, Oz Scott, must be given high credit. Choreography by Paula Moss. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 246-5969. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Hold Me!—An entertainment by Jules Feiffer, taken from his material of the past twenty years. With Geraldine Brooks and Paul Dooley. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Saturdays at 7:30 and 10; Sundays at 7:30; and Tuesday through Friday, Feb. 22-25, at 8. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Isadora Duncan Sleeps with the Russian Navy—Jeff Wanshel has written a very funny and eccentric script about filming the biography of the great (and eccentric) dancer, but the production—far too elaborate—does it small service. With Marian Seldes in the title role. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 247-0393. Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday at 7:30, and Thursday at 6:30. Matinées Wednesday and Saturday at 2, and Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, Feb. 20.)

Marco Polo Sings a Solo—A science-fiction spree, by John Guare, about a put-upon young movie director and those gathered around him on an island off Norway in 1999 and in outer space. The show brims over with funny ideas, routines, and jokes—verbal and visual. Joel Grey gives a marvellous performance in the leading role, and Madeline Kahn and Anne Jackson are fine, too. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 677-6350. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

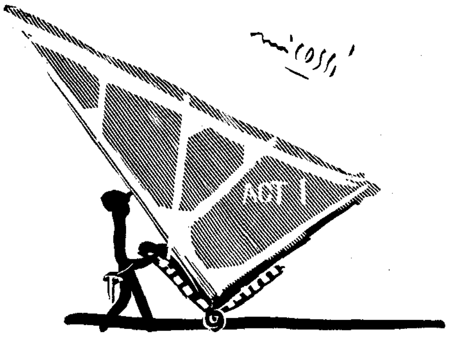
My Life—This play about a young physicist in a jam, chiefly because his past keeps intruding on his present, becomes difficult at times, but it is rarely dull, and it is well performed, under Marshall W. Mason's direction. William Hurt does especially well in the tough leading role. (Circle Repertory Company Theatre, 99 Seventh Ave. S., at Sheridan Sq. 924-7100. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Sundays at 3. Closes Sunday, Feb. 27.)

Nightclub Cantata—The remarkable young composer Elizabeth Swados has set poems and passages of prose by a number of writers, among them herself, to her own arresting, dramatic music. Her selections are, for the most part, strong and theatrical; and they are variously sung, spoken, and enacted by a good company of four men and four women, among them herself. Miss Swados also directed. The accompaniment—Judith Fleisher (piano), William Milhizer (percussion), and Miss S. (guitar)—is first-rate. (Top of the Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 982-9292. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays at 5:30 and Sundays at 3.)

The Night of the Iguana—Tennessee Williams is a specialist in castaways, and he has brought an admirable assortment of them together in this play. With Richard Chamberlain, Sylvia Miles, Dorothy McGuire, and William Roerick. (Circle in the Square, Broadway at 50th St. 581-0720. Wednesday through Saturday at 8. Matinées Wednesday and Saturday at 2, and Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, Feb. 20.)

Oh! Calcutta!—A collection of short sketches that purport to give us a refreshing view of sex and do not. (Edison, 240 W. 47th St. 757-7164. Mondays through Wednesdays, and Fridays, at 8; Saturdays, except Feb. 26, at 7 and 9:30; Sundays at 7; and Saturday, Feb. 26, at 8. Matinées Sundays at 3; special matinée Monday, Feb. 21.)

Otherwise Engaged—Simon Gray's harsh but extremely funny account of a London publisher who seeks to keep life at arm's length. Life, as usual, has different ideas. Tom Courtenay stars, and the director is Harold Pinter. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 246-9156. Nightly, except Sundays and Monday, Feb. 21, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2; special matinée Monday, Feb. 21, at 3.)



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A Party with Betty Comden and Adolph Green—Forty years of amusing songs and satiric takeoffs, by two youthful stars. (Morosco, 217 W. 45th St. 246-6230. Nightly, except Sundays and Monday, Feb. 21, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2; special matinée Monday, Feb. 21, at 3.)

Piaf . . . A Remembrance—A musical play based on the late singer's life, by David Cohen, with Finnish-born Juliette Koka in the title role. Directed by Lee Rachman. (Playhouse, 359 W. 48th St. 541-9820. Tuesdays through Saturdays, except Thursday, Feb. 17, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Sexual Perversity in Chicago and Duck Variations—David Mamet's pair of truly funny comedies, each of them with an undercurrent of sadness. The first deals, in scenes as brief as blackouts, with the fragile affair between a couple of innocents who are all but shredded by their former homosexual partners. The second is, strictly speaking, a poem in the guise of the desultory, meandering conversation of two old Jewish men pottering around a park bench. Albert Takazauckas directed the capable cast. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020. Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 8. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Sly Fox—Larry Gelbart has transmogrified Ben Jonson's "Volpone," with hilarious results. The cast includes George C. Scott, Jack Gilford, Bob Dishy, John Heffernan, and Trish Van Devere. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 247-0472. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

A Sorrow Beyond Dreams—A dramatic adaptation of Peter Handke's spare, beautiful memoir of his mother's life and eventual suicide, which has become a literary classic. The effect of the book is greatly enhanced by a beautiful performance by Len Cariou, script in hand. Adaptation and direction by Daniel Freudenberger. (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. 765-1281. Wednesday through Saturday at 8, and Sunday at 7:30. Matinées Saturday and Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, Feb. 20.)

The Trip Back Down—John Cullum is the star of this cautionary tale about a racing-car driver and his failed hopes. The author is John Bishop, and the director is Terry Schreiber. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 246-5639. Nightly, except Sundays and Monday, Feb. 21, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2; special matinée Monday, Feb. 21.)

Unexpected Guests—Jerry Stiller and Zohra Lampert in a comedy by Jordan Crittenden. Charles Grodin is the director. Previews through Tuesday, Feb. 22. Opens officially on Wednesday, Feb. 23. (Little Theatre, 240 W. 44th St. 221-6425. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8; opening-night curtain at 6:45. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Your Arms Too Short to Box with God—Vinnette Carroll's singing-and-dancing redaction of the Book of Matthew. An exhilarating occasion. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. JU 2-3897. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

Long Runs—**bubbling brown sugar:** A joyful, if rather simpleminded, Cook's tour of Harlem in its golden age between the wars. The cast is lively and gifted, and the old songs are enchanting. (ANTA Theatre, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-6270. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 2:30.). . . **chicago:** An unpleasant musical about dreary people, but with a stunning performance by Jerry Orbach. (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 246-4271. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.). . . **a chorus line:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. A brilliant, innovative musical, conceived, choreographed, and directed by Michael Bennett. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 246-5990. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.). . . **equus:** A psychological whodunit by Peter Shaffer. With Alec McCowen, Ralph Seymour, and Page Johnson. The director is John Dexter. (Helen Hayes, 210 W. 46th St. 246-6380. Tuesdays through Saturdays, except Thursday, Feb. 24, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3; special matinée Monday, Feb. 21, at 3.). . . **the fantasticks:** 7001 performances so far. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.). . . **godspell:** A musical adaptation of the Book of Matthew, and once a numbing prologue is over, it becomes a joyful celebration of theatre itself. Songs by Stephen Schwartz. (Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 265-1855. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 2 and 5:30.). . . **grease:** A musical (score, book, and lyrics by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey) that parodies, by faithful imitation, the songs and dances of the nineteen-fifties. The young cast performs capably and with spirit. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 245-5760. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.). . . **the magic show:** A wretched musical, but the magic tricks make up for it all. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 489-6392. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 2 and 5.). . . **my fair lady:** A well-nigh perfect revival of the well-nigh perfect musical. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 586-5555. Wednesday through Saturday at 8. Matinées Wednesday and Saturday at 2, and Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, Feb. 20.). . . **pippin:** A great big show that ably conceals a tiny little musical. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 265-2412. Nightly, except Sundays and Thursdays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, except Feb. 23, and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3; special matinée Monday, Feb. 21, at 2.). . . **same time, next year:** A slick and sentimental comedy about happy marriages and a single twenty-five-year-long, happy adultery, practiced annually. With Sandy Dennis and Ted Bessell. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 245-3430. Wednesdays through Sundays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3; special matinée Monday, Feb. 21, at 3.) . . . **shenandoah:** Hokum, but with a lot of songs. William Chapman sings many of them. (Alvin, 250 W. 52nd St. 757-8646. Tuesdays, except Feb. 22, through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3; special matinée Monday, Feb. 21, at 2.). . . **streamers:** This play, set in an Army barracks in Virginia in 1965, completes David Rabe's trilogy on the Vietnam war. Though not quite up to Mr. Rabe's "Pavlo Hummel," on the same theme, it is very strong. The production, under Mike Nichols' direction, is excellent, with especially good performances by Peter Evans and Terry Alexander. There is considerable onstage bloodshed. (Newhouse, 150 W. 65th St. 787-8080. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:30, and Sundays at 3.). . . **vanities:** In three acts, three Southern high-school girl cheerleaders change from all but identical "best friends" (1963) into quite different and incompatible New Yorkers (1974), in this amusing and gently ironic comedy by

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

Jack Heifner. Garland Wright directed the attractive performance. (Downstairs at the Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)... **THE WIZ**: An elaborate and mostly successful version of "The Wizard of Oz," with an all-black cast of great talent. Directed by Geoffrey Holder, who also did the costumes. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 246-0730. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

MISCELLANY

Aladdin—More than a hundred life-size marionettes in a musical production taken from tales of the "Arabian Nights," with music by Arnold Miller. Opens Sunday, Feb. 20, and will run through Sunday, Feb. 27. (Felt Forum, Madison Square Garden, Eighth Ave. between 31st and 33rd Sts. 564-4400. Weekdays at 10:30, 1, and 3:30, and Sundays at 1 and 3:30.)

DANCE

New York City Ballet—Tentative schedule of final performances of the season—Wednesday, Feb. 16, at 8: "Chaconne," "La Sonnambula," and "Symphony in C."... ¶ Thursday, Feb. 17, at 8: "Serenade," "Dances at a Gathering," and "La Sonnambula."... ¶ Friday, Feb. 18, at 8: "Symphony in Three Movements," "Other Dances," and "Union Jack."... ¶ Saturday, Feb. 19, at 2: "Serenade," "Bournonville Divertissements," and "Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet."... ¶ Saturday, Feb. 19, at 8: "Tchaikovsky Suite No. 2," "Sonatine-Ravel," "Symphony in Three Movements," and "Stars and Stripes."... ¶ Sunday, Feb. 20, at 1: "Jewels."... ¶ Sunday, Feb. 20, at 7: "Fanfare," "Bournonville Divertissements," and "Symphony in C." (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. TR 7-4727.)

Murray Louis Dance Company and Nikolais Dance Theatre—A four-week joint engagement—**MURRAY LOUIS**: Wednesday evening, Feb. 16, and Sunday evening, Feb. 20: "Geometrics," "Déjà Vu," and "Index."... ¶ Friday evening, Feb. 18, and Thursday evening, Feb. 24: "Scheherezade."... ¶ Saturday evening, Feb. 19: "Revue" and "Ceremony."... ¶ Saturday matinée, Feb. 26: "Porcelain Dialogues," "Continuum," and "Glances."... **NIKOLAIS**: Saturday matinée, Feb. 19, and Friday and Saturday evenings, Feb. 25-26: Group dance from "Sanctum," "Guignol," and "Triad."... ¶ Sunday matinée, Feb. 20: "Temple," "Arporisms," and "Foreplay."... ¶ Wednesday evening, Feb. 23: "Styx" and "Tower."... **NIKOLAIS AND LOUIS**: Thursday evening, Feb. 17, and Tuesday evening, Feb. 22: The two companies will perform together in unannounced programs. (Beacon, Broadway at 74th St. 874-1717. Evenings at 8. Matinées at 3. Closes Sunday, March 6.)

Dance Umbrella—Opening performances of a four-and-a-half-week season by six contemporary dance companies which will end Sunday, March 20. **DAN WAGONER AND DANCERS**: Wednesday through Friday evenings, Feb. 16-18, and Saturday and Sunday matinées and evenings, Feb. 19-20.... **LAR LUBOVITCH DANCE COMPANY**: Tuesday through Saturday evenings, Feb. 22-26, and Sunday matinée and evening, Feb. 27. (Roundabout Stage One, 333 W. 23rd St. 924-7160. Evenings at 8. Matinées at 2.)

Chuck Davis Dance Company—In two programs of works adapted from traditional African dances. Program I: Thursday, Feb. 24, at 7:30, and Saturday, Feb. 26, at 8.... ¶ Program II: Friday, Feb. 25, at 8, and Sunday, Feb. 27, at 2. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 636-4100.)

NIGHT LIFE

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town.)

Ali's Alley, 77 Greene St., between Spring and Broome Sts. (226-9042)—This unpretentious night club—although some might think of it as a posh SoHo music loft with a liquor license—presents some of the most engaging

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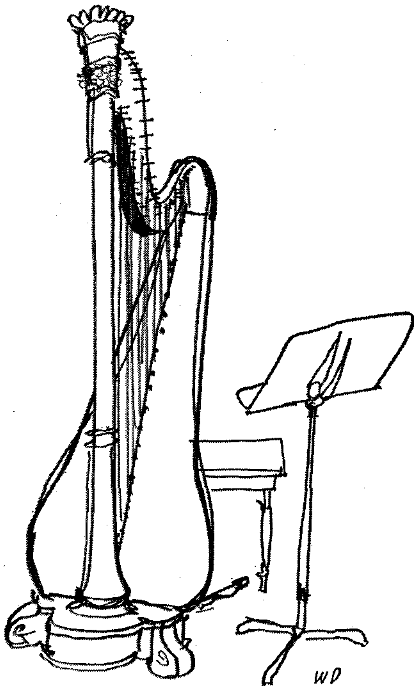
experimental and tried-and-true jazz in the city. All-out drummer **ANDREW CYRILLE** and his band Maono occupy the hexagonal stand through Saturday, Feb. 19; and on Tuesday, Feb. 22, tenor saxophonist **CLIFFORD JORDAN** will arrive with his quartet. On Mondays, composer, arranger, and tenor and soprano saxophonist **FRANK FOSTER** presides over the **LOUD MINORITY**, a spirited, head-turning musical monolith (twenty-two free-lance musicians, some young and promising, others older and fulfilled). Music from about ten. Soul food. Closed Sundays.

Ballroom, 458 West Broadway, between Houston and Prince Sts. (473-9367)—Even though he's hovering near forty, Chad Mitchell still looks like the clean-cut college kid pictured on Chad Mitchell Trio records from the early sixties. In those days, Mitchell and his two cohorts sang innocuous protest songs; today, Mitchell, who works with a fine, airtight backup trio, is singing pop arrangements of things like "Subterranean Homesick Blues" and "Like a Rolling Stone." He is also working from a standard and, sometimes, uplifting repertoire that includes Jacques Brel's "Marieke." Mitchell brings a slight folkie's twang and the furrowed-brow earnestness that goes with it to the cabaret circuit, and he performs with a lively, rolling baritone and a style that generally avoids self-indulgence. Through Sunday, Feb. 20. On Tuesday, Feb. 22, Sandy Stewart, who had a hit song, "My Coloring Book," several years ago, will come in. Tuesdays through Thursdays, and Sundays, at eight-thirty and ten-thirty, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dinner.

Bar None, 167 E. 33rd St. (684-3223)—Sort of thirties chophouse. The pianist **DARDANELLE** is on hand from seven until midnight, Tuesdays through Saturdays. Her playing is genteel Tatum, but her singing is pure, effortless, and delightful.

Beefsteak Charlie's, 55 Fifth Ave., at 12th St. (675-4720)—This enlightened branch of a thirty-eight-part restaurant chain brings in fine musicians to play in its cocktail lounge. The management puts them in the picture window on Fifth Avenue to lure in patrons, and the strategy is successful. If you don't have time to go inside and listen to Hank Jones, Roland Hanna, Walter Davis, or some other noteworthy pianist, you can at least wave as you walk by. (On a recent evening, a woman left her double-parked car, approached the window while Hank Jones was soloing, and asked him with anxious gestures whether he would be playing until one or two. Jones answered her with reassuring nods, smiled at her, smiled at the audience, and never missed a beat, while she went back to her car to park it.) Singer, pianist, and composer **ANDY BEY** is here through Saturday, Feb. 19; on Wednesday, Feb. 23, **HANK JONES** will return for four nights. Music from nine until two Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, and from ten on Fridays and Saturdays. Dinner.



Boomer's, 340 Bleecker St., at Christopher St. (243-0245)—Well-amplified mainstream and, occasionally, out-there jazz on the bandstand. Pianist Hal Galper, trumpeter Randy Brecker, saxophonist Mike Brecker, bassist Wayne Dockery, and drummer Eddie Moore join forces through Saturday, Feb. 19; trumpeter **BILL HARDMAN** will lead a quintet that features tenor saxophonist **JUNIOR COOK** Monday through Wednesday, Feb. 21-23; and on Thursday, Feb. 24, singer and pianist Bobby Scott will arrive with a quintet. Music from nine-thirty.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Something for nearly everyone: the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band trades sets with singer Andrew Gold on Wednesday, Feb. 16; singer Deniece Williams will come in on Thursday, Feb. 17; on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 18-19, trumpeter **MAYNARD FERGUSON** and his band will churn out funky, gospel-tinged, heavily amplified jazz; Monday through Wednesday, Feb. 21-23, have been set aside for **MOSE ALLISON**, a simultaneously rustic and urbane singer and pianist, and his trio; on Thursday, Feb. 24, rhythm-and-blues and disco singers and songwriters Ashford and Simpson will arrive with their band. Shows at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty Sundays through Thursdays, and at nine and midnight Fridays and Saturdays. Dinner.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar with dark pine panelling, patrons who like to talk, and good musicians, mostly pianists, who don't seem to mind playing through the talking. **BARRY HARRIS**, the Sunday player, is here all week, too, through Sunday, Feb. 20, with his aides, drummer Leroy Williams and bassist Hal Dodson. On Monday, Feb. 21, **JOHN BUNCH** and his bassist, **GEORGE MRAZ**, will take over. Music from ten weeknights; from nine-thirty on Sundays. Dinner.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (RH 4-1600)—**TEDDI KING**, who is replacing Bobby Short in the Café Carlyle, has been a good singer for twenty-five years, with a rich, controlled vibrato, an exact and daring sense of dynamics, and an excellent rhythmic placement. Her first-rate accompaniment is by **IRV JOSEPH** on piano, **ERNIE FURTADO** on bass, and **JOSH GERBER** on drums. Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-forty-five and eleven-forty-five. Dinner and supper.... **MARIAN MCPARTLAND** is reënsconced in the Bemelmans Bar, and it's a good thing, too. Music from nine to one, except Sundays.

C.B.G.B. & O.M.F.U.G., 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—This mid-sixties-seedy, neo-Bowery bar presents mostly local, primitive rock bands. Music most nights from roughly nine-thirty. Monday is showcase night.

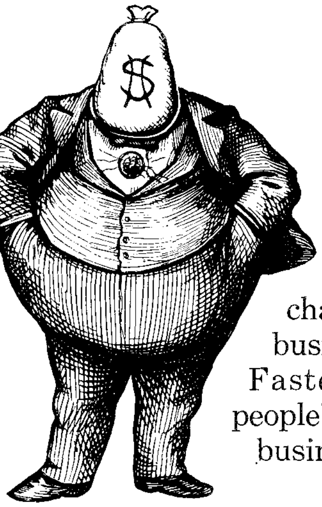
Chung Kuo Yuan, 1115 Third Ave., at 65th St. (371-9090)—**HUGH SHANNON** has settled in the Aquarium Lounge here, singing in his special straight-ahead Billie Holiday way, pulling song after song out of his private thin air. He works Wednesdays through Sundays from nine to two.

Cleo, 1 Lincoln Plaza, Broadway at 63rd St. (724-6301)—Joyce Bryant is singing, a bit too theatrically, accompanied by Don Sturrock, on piano, and Don Raphael, on Fender bass. Tuesdays through Saturdays at ten and eleven-thirty.

Cookery, 21 University Pl., at 8th St. (OR 4-4450)—**MAXINE SULLIVAN** has claimed the middle of the room, and her singing is supported by pianist **DICK KATZ** and bassist **MICHAEL MOORE**. Weeknights from eight to one. Blues pianist **SAMMY PRICE** plays on Sundays. Dining.

Eddie Condon's, 144 W. 54th St. (265-8277)—

Too many people believe business doesn't give a damn about the public.



Minds are tough to change.

Times *do* change, though. And business is changing. Faster than a lot of people's attitudes toward business.

American business invests more money every year in strenuous efforts to communicate the benefits of competitive enterprise. (Including ads like this one.)

Yet survey after survey shows that public sentiment is against big business.

This suggests to us a communications problem. And a credibility problem.

It also suggests some possible corrective steps toward more effective communications with the public.

First, let's stop talking mostly to ourselves.

Let's stop resorting to one-sided arguments that thoughtful adults are no longer willing to accept on faith.

Let's stop pretending that there aren't any flaws at all in our system, and the way it works.

Instead, let's face up to our mistakes, and correct them. Admit that we're not perfect. And engage in open discourse instead of arm-twisting diatribes.

Since public opinion is ultimately the controlling force in our democracy, an informed public is really one of the costs of staying in business.

Thus there may be only one way for business to restore its credibility. And that's to tell it like it is.

It's definitely worth a try.

(Why not try these thoughts out on somebody who's turned off by business?)

Pennwalt Corporation, Three Parkway,
Philadelphia, Pa. 19102.

For 126 years we've been making things people need—including profits.

PENNWALT
CHEMICALS ■ EQUIPMENT
HEALTH PRODUCTS

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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Herbie Hall, Vic Dickenson, Warren Vaché, Jr., Jim Andrews, Connie Kay, and Red Balaban (who owns the place) are the traditionalists who usually make up the house band. On Tuesday, Feb. 22, trombonist **JIMMY KNEPPER** will sit in with the regulars. Music from nine-thirty. On Sunday, Feb. 20, trumpeter **HOWARD MCGHEE** and his quintet will play from eight. Dinner.

Gregory's, 1149 First Ave., at 63rd St. (371-2220)—An attractive haunt, short on space but not on music: Mondays and Tuesdays from ten to three, **AL HAIG**, one of the first and best bop pianists, goes to town with guitarist **CHUCK WAYNE** and bassist Jamil Nasser. Sunday, Feb. 20, vibraharpist **WARREN CHIASSON** performs with pianist **KENNY BARRON**, a Monkophile, and bassist Earl May from five-thirty to nine-thirty. Wednesdays through Sundays from ten to three, **BROOKS KERR**, a twenty-five-year-old stride pianist and Ellingtoniac; **SONNY GREER**, the ageless drummer who was with Ellington for some thirty years; and **RUSSELL PROCOPE**, who joined the Ellington reed section in 1945, goad each other and come up with delightful swing numbers. And weeknights from six to nine-thirty, trumpeter Gene Roland, pianist Loumell Morgan, and bassist Morris Edwards get together on the tiny bandstand.

Hopper's, 452 Sixth Ave., at 11th St. (260-0250)—**JOE PASS** is a forty-eight-year-old guitarist who, over the past ten years or so, has been increasingly revered by jazz and rock guitarists alike. (Guitarists generally make up a good part of Pass's audiences.) He's working here (through Saturday, Feb. 19) unaccompanied, which is a mixed blessing. He is an adroit technician, but without the stimulus of and interplay with other musicians, he tends to fall back on set bravura licks, and on uptempoed songs he can be a bit hammy. One recent evening, for instance, he played more than a dozen whiz-bang-paced choruses of "How High the Moon," a number he appeared to confuse with "The Flight of the Bumblebee." (Most of his listeners didn't mind.) On the other hand, playing alone also forces him to draw on every technical resource of the guitar—bass lines, chording, and contrapuntal melodies—and on his own stunning timekeeping abilities. Playing slow, medium-tempoed tunes—such guitarists' stock-in-trade favorites as "Have You Met Miss Jones?" and "Here's That Rainy Day"—Pass can be musically, and especially rhythmically, adroit; his ballads don't just hang there, they really move. Monday through Saturday, Feb. 21-26, pianist **GEORGE SHEARING** will take over with his quartet. Mondays through Thursdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine-thirty, eleven, and twelve-thirty. No music Sundays.

Jimmy Ryan's, 154 W. 54th St. (CO 5-9505)—**ROY ELDRIDGE**, aided by resident blowers Johnny Morris on piano, Eddie Locke on drums, Joe Muranyi on reeds, Ted Sturgis on bass, and Bobby Pratt on trombone, is present Tuesdays through Saturdays. **JIMMY MCPARTLAND** fills in for Eldridge through Saturday, Feb. 19. On Mondays, Max Kaminsky leads the group. Music weeknights from nine-thirty to three. On Sundays, Kaminsky directs another group of musical archivists from eight until two.

Larson's, 1160 Third Ave., at 68th St. (744-2540)—**ELLIS LARKINS**, now with a bassist (**BILLY POPP**) and a drummer (**JACK MCALLISTER**), is rising to new heights—his arpeggios sparkle, his chords are buoyant, his touch is as a butterfly. Tuesdays through Saturdays, from ten to two. Dinner.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—During the next several weeks, Gil Wiest, the proprietor here, is offering a feast of singers, who will salute Alec Wilder's "American Popular Song" by performing a great many of the good songs discussed in its pages. **MARLENE VERPLANCK** and **MARK MURPHY**, accompanied by pianist **LOONIS MCGLOHON**, are on now. **JACKIE CAIN** and **ROY KRAL** will be coming in on Tuesday, Feb. 22. Tuesdays through Saturdays from nine-fifteen to one. On Mondays, from nine-thirty to midnight, Woody Allen comes and goes, talking of Lorenzo Tio. Dinner and supper. Closed Sundays.

Mikell's, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—An often crowded upper West Side jazz-and-soul café. Local groups—aspiring and established ones—gather on the canopied bandstand. Music from about ten until three. Dinner.

Other End, 149 Bleecker St. (673-7030)—Son of the Bitter End. Saxophonist Joe Farrell and his quintet perform opposite trumpeter **MARVIN (HANNIBAL) PETERSON** and his group through Sunday, Feb. 20; on Friday, Feb. 25, **DAVE VAN RONK**, a big, bearlike lumberjack of a folkie, will come for three nights to do his raspy-voiced renditions of songs by the Rev. Gary Davis, Mississippi John Hurt, Jelly Roll Morton, and Joni Mitchell. Shows most nights at nine and eleven-thirty; on Fridays and Saturdays at nine and midnight. Snacks.

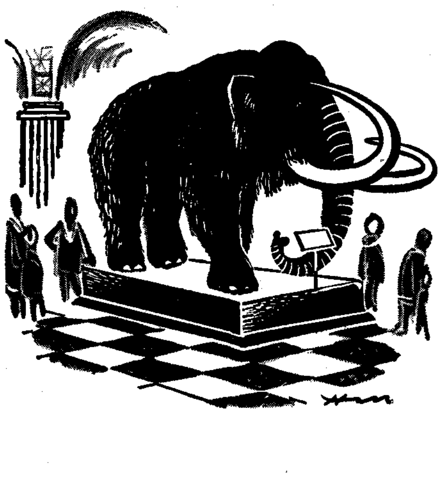
Rainbow Room, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (PL 7-9090)—The preserve of the waltz, the fox-trot, the tango, the cha-cha, the merengue, the rumba. **BOBBY ROSENGARDEN** has the band for them, and its quiet, sleek arrangements are faultless. Tuesdays through Thursdays from seven to one, Fridays and Saturdays from eight to two, and Sundays from six to midnight. Dining.

Reno Sweeney, 126 W. 13th St. (691-0900)—Novella Nelson, who has a substantial following in these quarters, will do her stylized and dramatic vocals on Sunday and Monday, Feb. 20-21. On Tuesday, Feb. 22, Holly Woodlawn, the torch-singer female impersonator and another house favorite, will take the stage. Shows at nine and midnight. Dining. Thursdays through Saturdays, from five-thirty to seven, **BLOSSOM DEARIE** presents concert-style sets, in which she plays piano and sings "I'm Hip," "Peel Me a Grape," and "The Pro Musica Antiqua" in a small, seemingly fragile, direct voice.

Storyville, 41 E. 58th St. (755-1640)—**SONNY FORTUNE**, a hard-edged, driving, and altogether satisfying alto saxophonist, heads up his quintet through Saturday, Feb. 19; on Monday, Feb. 21, saxophonist **SAM RIVERS** will lead a sixteen-piece affair; and singer and bebop pathfinder **EDDIE JEFFERSON** will bring in a quintet on Thursday, Feb. 24. Music from ten to two-thirty. On Sunday, Feb. 20, a Jazz Interactions concert from seven to eleven will feature a quartet co-piloted by four-string guitarist **TINY GRIMES** and seven-string guitarist **BUCKY PIZZARELLI**. Closed Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb. 22-23.

Stryker's, 103 W. 86th St., at Columbus Ave. (874-8754)—A small, clean-cut upper West Side outpost. On Mondays, trombonist Rod Levitt shows up with an octet; alternately pensive and soaring altoist **LEE KONITZ**, always worth listening to, heads a nonet on Wednesdays and Thursdays; and Fridays and Saturdays, trumpeter and occasional vocalist **CHET BAKER** will inspire his young cool-jazz quartet. Music from nine-thirty. Closed Sundays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Conga wizard **MONGO SANTAMARIA** leads a quartet through Saturday, Feb. 19; on Sunday, Feb. 20, four sturdy players—keyboardist Mike Nock, guitarist John Scofield, bassist Herb Bushler, and drummer Darryl Washington—will begin collaborating. The hours are from nine Mondays through Thursdays, from ten on Fridays and Saturdays, and from eight on Sundays. Dinner.



Tramps, 125 E. 15th St., at Irving Pl. (260-0370)—Much of one's success and ability as a folkie can be measured by one's taste—what songs one can dig up. **SID SELVIDGE**, who is much better known in Memphis, ambles onstage like an absentminded folksinger. When he begins singing, it's clear he knows exactly what he's doing. His guitar-playing may leave a little to be desired, but his relaxed, nonsense-song interpretations of blues by Furry Lewis, Ivory Joe Hunter, and others are right on the mark. Shows Wednesdays through Saturdays at ten and midnight. Dinner.

Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—The music has been moved downstairs in this Village landmark, which draws both tourists and knowledgeable jazz partisans. Flutist **HERBIE MANN** and his group, the Family of Mann, will be onstage Fridays through Sundays. Fridays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty; Saturdays at nine-thirty, eleven-thirty, and one-thirty; and Sundays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (989-9011)—Drummer **TONY WILLIAMS**, temporarily forsaking his jazz-rock inclinations, works with bassist **RON CARTER** and pianist **HANK JONES** through Sunday, Feb. 20; on Tuesday, Feb. 22, drummer **ART BLAKEY** will bring in his latest batch of **JAZZ MESSENGERS**. On Mondays, the seventeen-piece **THAD JONES-MEL LEWIS** organization blasts forth. Music from ten.

West Boondock, 114 Tenth Ave., at 17th St. (924-9723)—A hanging tetrahedron made of plastic straws and pipe cleaners, stained-glass windows, and nicely constructed jazz by piano-bass duos help this restaurant sustain the interest its kitchen formerly aroused. Music from eight to two.

West End Café, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (666-8750)—Visiting musical professors have their say on the subject of thirties and forties jazz every night of the week in this beer-and-burger café, Columbia's off-campus music-appreciation classroom. Mondays and Tuesdays, trumpeter Franc Williams heads a quartet that includes Eddie Durham, an electric-guitar pioneer from about fifty years ago; Wednesdays, **JO JONES** usually shows up with his hi-hat and a quartet; and Thursdays and Fridays are given over to George Kelly's Jazz Sultans. Saturdays and Sundays are set aside for a quintet that includes, at one time or another, ex-Basie-ites **BUDDY TATE**, **EARLE WARREN**, Paul Quinichette, and others. The music starts at nine. All this and student food at student prices.

JAZZ/FOLK/ROCK CONCERTS, PERSONAL APPEARANCES, ETC.

Interludes—A varied series of hour-long performances at Town Hall (JU 2-4536)—Wednesday, Feb. 16, at 5:45: **GEORGE ROSE**. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Feb. 23, at 5:45: **ANDRÉ EGLEVSKY AND ENSEMBLE FROM THE EGLEVSKY BALLET COMPANY**.

Loft Jazz—New music and new jazz at Studio Rivbea, 24 Bond St., at Lafayette St. (777-8656, 473-9936)—Friday, Feb. 18: **JULIUS HEMPHILL** and **LESTER BOWIE**. . . . ¶ Saturday, Feb. 19: **ANTHONY BRAXTON**. . . . ¶ Sunday, Feb. 20: **WINDS OF MANHATTAN**. . . . ¶ Friday, Feb. 25: **DAVID MURRAY ENSEMBLE**. . . . ¶ Saturday, Feb. 26: **DEWEY REDMAN**. (Performances at eight and ten.)

Jazz Stars of the Seventies—Gary Burton, Steve Swallow, Barry Miles, Eric Kloss, and Cavril Payne. (Eisner and Lubin Auditorium, Loeb Student Center, Washington Sq. S. and LaGuardia Pl. 598-3757. Wednesday, Feb. 16, at 8.)

Barry White, Love Unlimited, and the Love Unlimited Orchestra—Felt Forum, Madison Square Garden, Eighth Ave. between 31st and 33rd Sts. 564-4400. Friday and Saturday, Feb. 18-19, at 7 and 10.

Kiss—Madison Square Garden. Friday, Feb. 18, at 8.

Renaissance and **Sea Level**—Radio City Music

PORSCHE CREATES A NEW PORSCHE

You would expect a new Porsche to be engineered for maximum driveability. And, indeed, the new Porsche 924, with its unique transaxle system, is designed to be the most driveable Porsche ever.

But the 924 is more than that. It is also the most practical Porsche ever.

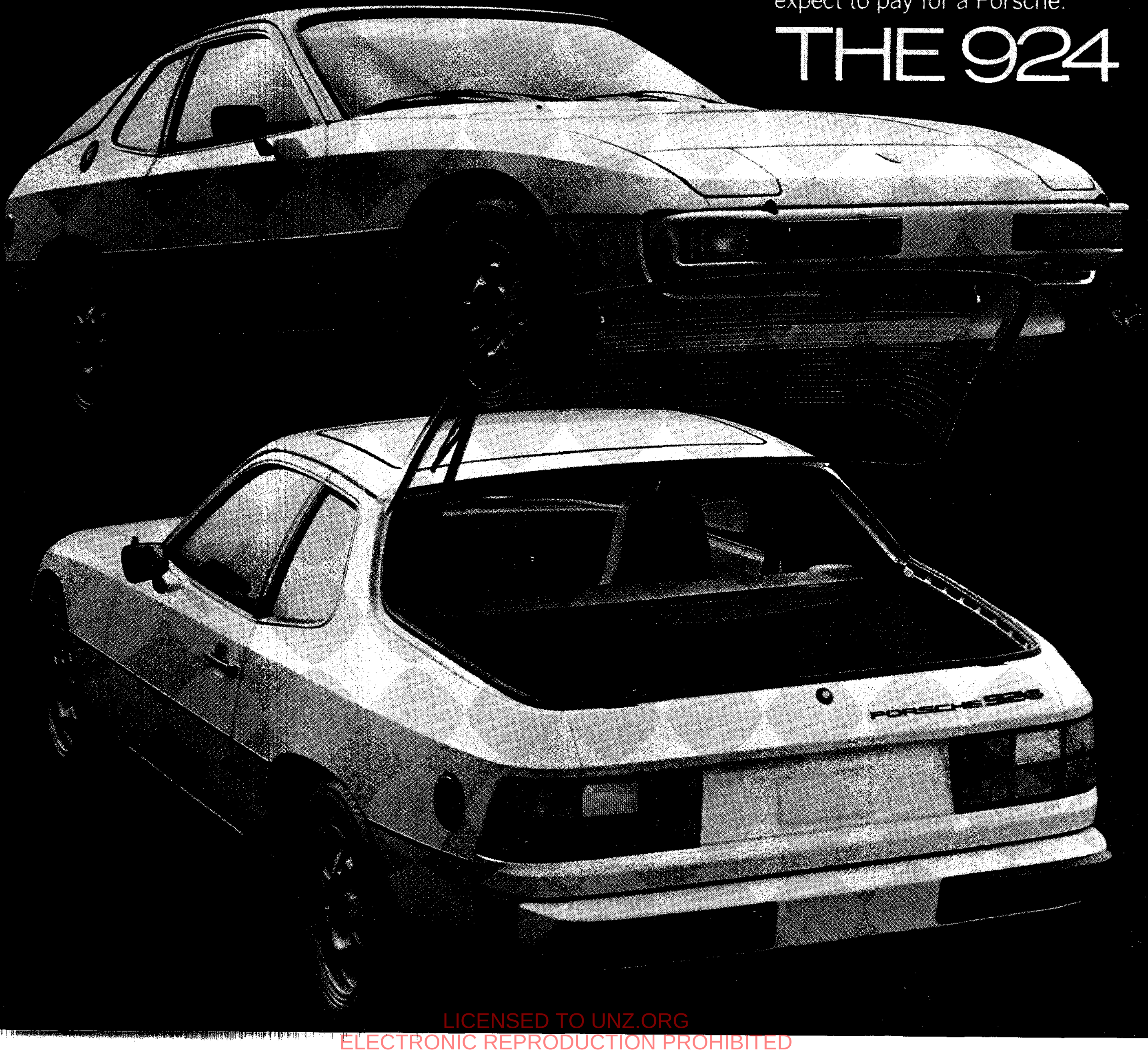
Take, for example, the clean, classic shape of this new Porsche. Those sleek lines are as aerodynamically practical as they are aesthetically pleasing. In wind tunnel tests, the Porsche 924 registered an incredibly low 0.36 drag coefficient.

Nor is that graceful sweep of glass that wraps about the rear deck of the 924 a mere stylistic whim. It is an eminently practical hatchback that opens with a finger touch to yield an unusually large amount of carrying space for a sports car.

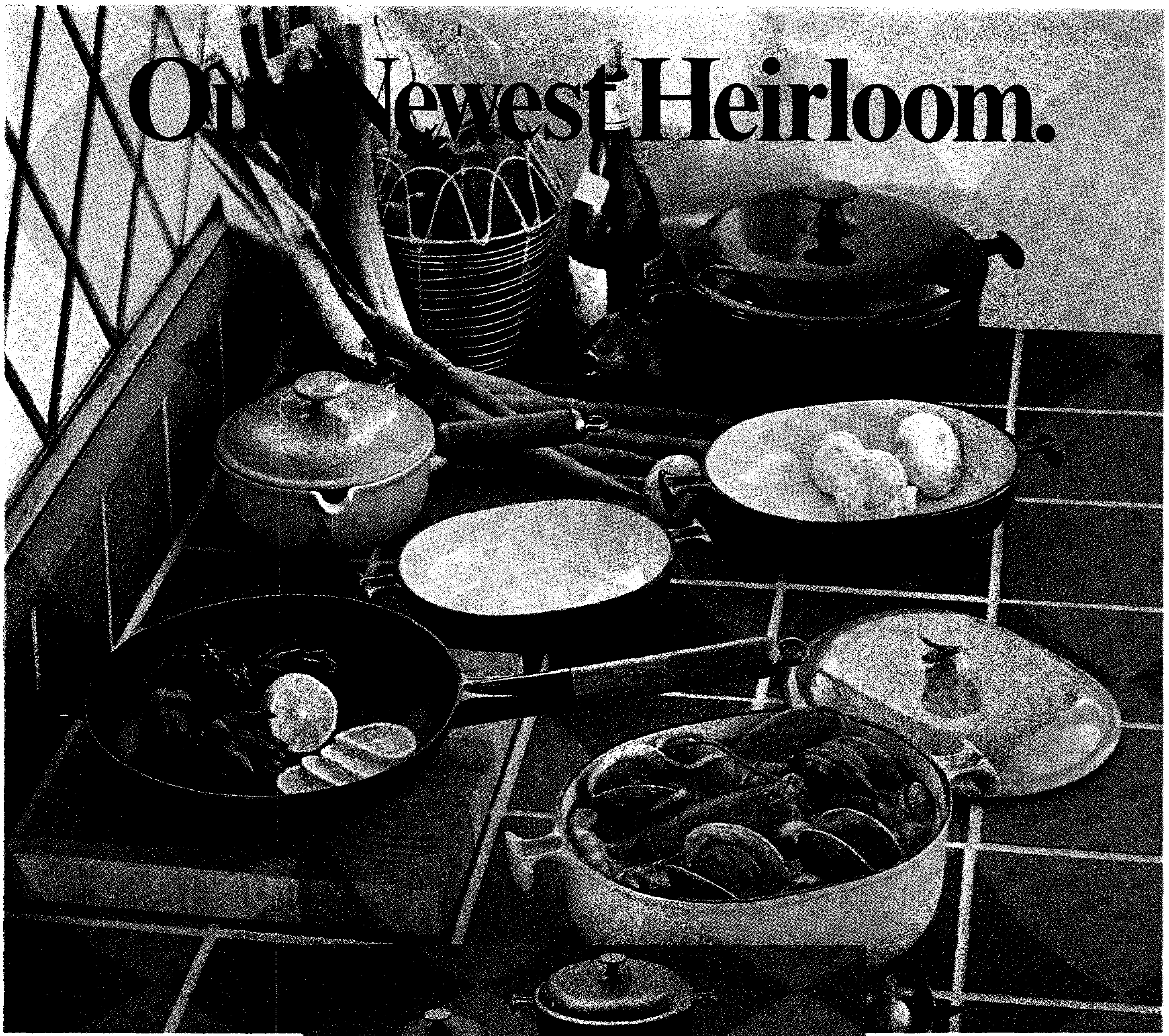
The 924's engine was engineered for practicality and economy. Its design and placement makes servicing easy and keeps repair costs to a minimum. And it gets 31 mpg on the highway, 17 mpg in the city with standard transmission. (According to EPA estimates. Actual mileage may vary, depending on driving habits, condition of car, and optional equipment.)

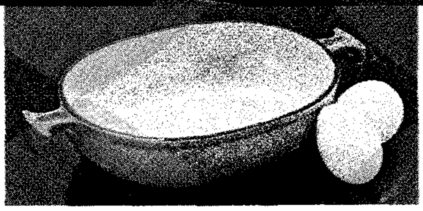
But perhaps the most practical thing about this new Porsche is its price. The 924 is not inexpensive. But it is less than you'd expect to pay for a Porsche.

THE 924



Our Newest Heirloom.





Le Creuset is a French tradition—many of our pots and pans lasting through four generations of everyday cooking and clean up. So when we designed our new complete line of Le Creuset contemporary «mama» cookware we changed the shape but kept the tradition.

We kept the elegance we had brought to cast-iron pots and pans by giving them teak handles and lots of colors—spice brown, sunflower yellow, cedar green, black satin—so they could move gracefully from stove to table. We kept the durability with vitreous enamel surfaces that withstand heat, spatulas and detergents.

But best of all we kept them cooking like no other pots and pans you've used before. Le Creuset absorbs, distributes and retains heat better to give you more control in your cooking. So fragile sauces won't scorch, bacon fries in unison, meat roasts evenly. You conserve gas and electricity, too.

So although the shape of our Le Creuset contemporary is a change, it will last for generations just like our traditional design.

And you can begin to save for posterity now with this specially priced 6 piece contemporary design starter set: A 5-quart round oven and 10″ fry pan with a cover that fits both, a 1-quart saucepan and 1½-quart round oven with a cover that fits both and a delightful little cookbook. Regularly $125.75. Now $79.95. (In all 4 colors.)

And in case your granddaughter might like an 8¼″ x 6¾″ oval dish, it's on sale at $12.95. Regularly $17.95.

For the retailer nearest you who carries Le Creuset traditional and contemporary designs and for a free cookbook of French recipes write: Schiller and Asmus, Inc., Dept. ET 1525 Merchandise Mart, Chicago, Illinois 60654.

LE CREUSET

Les pots and pans de France.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 246-4600. Friday and Saturday, Feb. 18-19, at 8.

Anthony Braxton, the Revolutionary Ensemble, and Billy Harper's Sextet—Town Hall. Friday, Feb. 18, at 8.

Central Park Sheiks—Eisner and Lubin Auditorium, Loeb Student Center. Friday, Feb. 18, at 8:30.

National Jazz Ensemble—Chuck Israels conducting, with Gerry Mulligan. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. Saturday, Feb. 19, at 8. For tickets, call 741-5690.)

Marshall Tucker Band—Palladium, 126 E. 14th St. Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 19-20, at 8. For information about tickets, call 541-7290.

Hannibal and Group—New York Jazz Museum, 236 W. 54th St. 765-2150. Sunday, Feb. 20, at 2, 3, and 4.

Genesis—Madison Square Garden. Wednesday, Feb. 23, at 8.

Robert Klein—Eisner and Lubin Auditorium, Loeb Student Center. Thursday, Feb. 24, at 8.

Melanie—Eisner and Lubin Auditorium, Loeb Student Center. Friday, Feb. 25, at 8.

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Léon Bakst (1886-1924)—Set and costume designs done for the Ballet Russe, plus other work. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Davis & Long, 746 Madison Ave., at 65th St.)

Ed Baynard—This artist uses a medium called "pochoirs" (stencil forms on paper and vinyl) to pursue his theme of bowls in various manifestations. Also monoprints. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Multiples, 55 E. 80th St.)

Gillian Bradshaw-Smith—Cast-stone sculptures and crayon drawings of sinuous torsos. Through March 19. (Cordier & Ekstrom, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Francis Brennan—Editorial drawings done for magazines and newspapers here and abroad. Through March 5. (Nicholls, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

Edmond Casarella and Paul Sisko—Abstract metal sculptures. Through March 2. (Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St.)

Benigna Chilla—Geometric constructions in mixed mediums and mounted in Lucite boxes. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Gurewitsch, 55 E. 74th St. Opens at 1.)

John Duff—Free-standing steel-rod sculptures. Through March 3. (Willard, 29 E. 72nd St.)

Lyonel Feininger (1871-1956)—Drawings and watercolors. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Sabarsky, 987 Madison Ave., at 77th St.)

Richard Florsheim—Semi-abstract landscape paintings. Through March 5. (ACA, 25 E. 73rd St.). . . ¶ Also, a two-gallery exhibit of graphics: Recent works at Associated American Artists, 663 Fifth Ave., at 53rd St., through March 5. (Open Mondays.) . . . Early prints at Lubin House, 11 E. 61st St., through March 30. (Open Mondays; closed Saturdays.)

William Glackens (1870-1938)—Illustrations, figure sketches, and landscapes in a variety of mediums. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Kraushaar, 1055 Madison Ave., at 80th St.)

Robert Goodnough—Recent abstract paintings. Through Thursday, Feb. 24. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

Nigel Hall—Wall sculptures made of painted-aluminum rods. Through March 2. (Elkon, 1063 Madison Ave., at 80th St.)

Robert Harvey—Doves and spotted dogs, painted mostly in grays and whites, plus a silhouetted still-life of tangled plants forming a leafy screen. Through Saturday, Feb. 19. (Krasner, 1043 Madison Ave., at 80th St.)

David Hendricks / Nancy Goldring—Large-scale landscape drawings. / Works combining photography and drawing. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Knowlton, 19 E. 71st St.)

Ellsworth Kelly—A two-gallery exhibit of new paintings. (Blum-Helman, 13 E. 75th St. Through March 12. . . . ¶ Castelli, 420 West Broadway. Through Saturday, Feb. 26.)

Kieff—Gleaming bronze abstract sculptures. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Findlay, 984 Madison Ave., at 77th St.)

Bascha Mon—Abstract oil paintings and crayon drawings, most of them organized around a grid pattern. First solo show in New York. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Ault, 25 E. 77th St.)

Kunito Nagaoka—Abstract watercolors; first one-man show in New York. Through March 5. (Staempfli, 47 E. 77th St.)

B. J. O. Nordfeldt (1878-1955)—Oil paintings of birds, fishes, and the sea. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

Tom Perkinson—Surrealist drawings of fantasy creatures that segue from human to animal to insect to vegetable form. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Aberbach, 988 Madison Ave., at 77th St.)

Wallace Putnam—Semi-abstract paintings whose subjects are derived from nature. Through March 3. (Lerner-Heller, 956 Madison Ave., at 75th St.)

Harold Sclar—Abstract metal sculptures. Through Saturday, Feb. 19. (Bodley, 1063 Madison Ave., at 80th St.)

Antonio Segui—Landscapes of the pampas, in which receding rows of fence posts without fencing convey a sense of endless space. The sombre colors—almost grisaille—and an occasional solitary figure add to the mystery. Through Saturday, Feb. 19. (Lefebre, 47 E. 77th St.)

Pierre Soulages—Ten paintings done during the past three decades by the French Expressionist. Through March 12. (Gimpel, 1040 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Jill Spelman—Small abstract paintings that share repeated colors and shapes, plus larger works that present a mirror image on a second canvas. Through March 4. (Phoenix, 939 Madison Ave., at 74th St.)

Joseph Stella (1877-1946)—A scattering of works from various stages of his career, including a quick watercolor study of the Brooklyn Bridge cables, preparatory to his most famous painting, plus figure drawings and scenes of Barbados. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Schoelkopf, 825 Madison Ave., at 69th St.)

Edward John Stevens—Gouaches based on a trip to Russia and other foreign parts. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Weyhe, 794 Lexington Ave., at 61st St.)

Edvins Strautmanis—Figurative drawings, done in an abandoned, free-form fashion with oil sticks on wrapping paper and newspaper. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Fair, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

Norman Turner—Representational paintings and drawings of nudes and landscapes. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Ingber, 3 E. 78th St.)

Kim Whanki (1913-74)—Abstract oils and works on paper. Through March 5. (Poindexter, 24 E. 84th St.)

Group Shows—At the **Borgenicht**, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.: For the past five seasons this gallery has devoted a show to Milton Avery (1893-1965) and his European peers. This year's exhibit has nudes by Avery, and by Degas, Pascin, Schiele, and others. Through March 3. . . . **Center for Inter-American Relations**, 680 Park Ave., at 68th St.: A hundred contemporary Latin-American artists, showing figurative and abstract drawings in mediums that include pencil, watercolor, and ink. Through March 27. (Daily, except Mondays, noon to 6.) . . . **Forum**, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.: Paintings and sculptures by Americans, among them Gregory Gillespie, Max Weber, and Bruno Lucchesi. Through March 4. . . . **Fourcade**, 36 E. 75th St.: Works on paper, small-scale sculptures, and various other small objects by Marcel Duchamp, Joseph Cornell, Joan Mitchell, Tony Smith, and others. Through March 19. . . . **Perls**, 1016 Madison Ave., at 78th St.: Paintings and sculptures by Dali, Picasso, Chagall, Maillol, and others. Through Saturday, Feb. 26.

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

Alice Baber—Large oil paintings made up of clouds of color, some of them airy wisps of pastel shades handled in a lyrical manner and some of them bright, almost harsh formations of scalelike medallions in sharply contrasting tones. Through Thursday, Feb. 24. (Sachs, 29 W. 57th St.)

Franco Ciarlo—This artist's interest in torn-down buildings began when his studio was demolished. He has produced a series of frescoes transferred to canvas, as well as drawings and other works, that resemble the stripped walls at demolition sites. Through March 5. (Iolas, 52 E. 57th St.)

Michael Clark—Small paintings of windows and other architectural details, by a colorist. Through March 2. (Crispo, 41 E. 57th St. Mondays, except Feb. 21, through Fridays, 11:30 to 4:30; Saturdays, 10:30 to 5:30.)

Robert Dash / Trevor Winkfield—Rural and small-town landscapes done in acrylics on paper by an artist who achieves a realist, almost detailed quality in his work by reducing it to small areas of flat color. / Fantasy creatures, boldly outlined and colored, by an artist who works in a cartoon style and borrows freely from Mother Goose. Through March 3. (Fischbach, 29 W. 57th St.)

James Ensor (1860-1949)—Twenty-two etchings, including some comic and bawdy ones involving animals, in a show that is running concurrently with his retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum. Through March 4. (Sumers, 50 W. 57th St.)

Mary Frank—Painted-ceramic figure sculptures (both freestanding and wall pieces), plus drawings and monoprints. Through March 19. (Zabriskie, 29 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Adolph Gottlieb (1903-74)—A comprehensive retrospective of paintings, along with a group of small works on paper. Through Wednesday, Feb. 23. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Palmer Hayden (1890-1973)—Oils and watercolors by an American folk artist. Through March 5. (JAM, 50 W. 57th St.)

Gershon Iskowitz—Abstract oils by an artist who is interested in the Canadian landscape seen from an airplane; first one-man show in New York. Through March 5. (Jackson, 521 W. 57th St.)

W. Louis Jones / Randy Stevens—Highly realistic still-life paintings of shells, vegetables, and animals. / Cartoonlike pastels of gatherings at bowling alleys, cocktail parties, and beauty pageants. Through March 3. (Kornblee, 20 W. 57th St.)

James Juszczyk—In these new works, using acrylics on large canvases and on paper, the

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

artist subdivides the working surface into lesser squares or rectangles, following a logical progression of his own, and glazes and reglazes the paint until it reaches the finish he is seeking. Through Saturday, Feb. 19. (Esman, 29 W. 57th St.)

Rex Lau—Painted wooden cutouts of hobo signs, as clear in meaning as the international traffic signs. (A stick figure with his hands up means "Look out, the farmer has a gun.") Through Saturday, Feb. 19. (Parsons-Dreyfuss, 24 W. 57th St.)

Jacques Lipchitz (1891-1973)—Forty-eight sculptures and a number of drawings, all taken from his Cubist period. Through March 12. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St.)

Richard Lytle—What might be taken for highly sophisticated abstract forms turn out to be ordinary seedpods, enormously magnified and beautifully painted by this Connecticut artist, who sets them against unusual (but unobtrusive) backgrounds—the fjords of Norway, a Western canyon. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Pearl, 29 W. 57th St.)

Brita Molin / Jan McCartin—Tapestried wall hangings, deep intaglio etchings, and lithographs, all done in lush colors inspired by a recent trip to the west coast of Africa. Through Friday, Feb. 18. / Still-lifes, and figures in landscapes. Through March 3. (Alonzo, 30 W. 57th St.)

Adrian Murphy—Acrylic paintings of circles within squares, and similar compositions. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Rehn, 655 Madison Ave., at 60th St.)

Philip Pearlstein—Huge watercolors of male and female nudes; a series of Western canyon landscapes; and a cityscape of downtown Manhattan. Through March 2. (Frumkin, 50 W. 57th St. Open Saturdays at noon; closed Sundays.)

Anne Raymo—The central work in this show of quilts is called "The Ancestors" and consists of thirteen quilts, twelve smaller ones surrounding a larger panel. Also prints. Through March 4. (Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St.)

Garry Rich—New abstract paintings. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Zarre, 41 E. 57th St.)

George Segal—Some of the spectral quality of this sculptor's plaster figures—cast directly from living people, and shown in workaday settings—vanishes when they are painted in bright, solid colors, as many of them are here—red, blue, green, black. Thirty-one recent works are in the exhibit. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Janis, 6 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Leon Polk Smith—Black, gray, and white hard-edge paintings on circular canvases. Through March 5. (René, 6 W. 57th St.)

Thomas Stokes / J. B. L. Goodwin—New color-field paintings, these composed of vertical panels of unusual hues that seem to be not so much simply juxtaposed as fused together at the edges. / Small paintings of a pronounced East Indian flavor, done by a New York-born artist who lives on the remote Caribbean island of Saba and spends a good deal of time in India. Through March 5. (Parsons, 24 W. 57th St.)

James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903)—Etchings and lithographs. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Kennedy, 40 W. 57th St.)

Group Shows—At the **midtown**, 11 E. 57th St.: A summery Manhattan street scene by Isabel Bishop; a wintry Maine seascape by William Thon; a family group by Waldo Peirce; and a Mexican plaza by the late Doris Rosenthal are among the works selected for the gallery's forty-fifth-anniversary show. Through Saturday, Feb. 19. . . . **washburn**, in a new location, at 42 E. 57th St.: A 1943 exhibit reconstructed. Marcel Duchamp's "Box in a Valise" (his own work in miniature), boxes by Joseph Cornell, and a series of small gouaches by Yves Tanguy. Through March 12.

GALLERIES—SoHo

Ross Bleckner—Oil paintings, about five feet square, of geometrical shapes on a black field. Through March 8. (Cuningham Ward, 94 Prince St.)

Jack Brusca—New paintings. Through March 12. (Bonino, 98 Prince St. Open Wednesday evenings until 9:30.)

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David Budd—Oil paint, in shades of gray mostly, applied to canvas with a palette knife. Through March 19. (Hutchinson, 138 Greene St.)

John Clem Clarke / Kazuko Inoue—Realist paintings of the wooden fences at construction sites. / Large abstract paintings. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (O.K. Harris, 383 West Broadway.)

Rafael Ferrer—Roomlike four-sided painted-canvas constructions, and other works. Through March 2. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway. Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

Dan Flavin—Two fluorescent arrangements, done in a varicolored grid pattern and set in opposite corners of a large, white-walled room, cast a pleasant luminescence throughout this sizable gallery, helped by two horizontal wall arrangements in an adjoining area. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Friedrich, 141 Wooster St. Opens at noon.)

Pinchas Cohen Gan—Paintings and constructions by this Israeli artist. At first encounter, the paintings seem so wispy and ephemeral as to be about to fade off the unstretched canvas completely, but they survive (and repay) repeated study. One of the constructions is a random pile of colored wooden blocks, entitled "Art History." Through March 2. (Protetch, 157 Spring St.)

Nancy Genn / Tony Vanderperk—Handmade papers, some chalk-white, some oatmeal-colored, and some in earth colors, torn in strips and arranged under Plexiglas in constructions of several layers and much style. / Horizontal wall sculptures done in intaglio—they cut into the wall rather than protrude from it. The main work is nearly twenty feet long. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Caldwell, 383 West Broadway. Open Wednesday evenings until 9:30.)

Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe / Ellen Phelan—Arrangements of squares painted in black and bright, solid colors. / Upright and rough-finished sculptured floor pieces, made of painted wood and plaster, that might well have been sawed out of some carpentered structure. Through Tuesday, Feb. 22. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

Nancy Graves—Random markings in oil and pastel on an all-white ground. Through March 2. (Emmerich, 420 West Broadway.)

Ralph Humphrey—Abstract paintings—wall pieces, really—on shaped canvas, usually several inches thick and coated with a thick impasto of rich colors, like deep blue and red laid on together, side by side. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Weber, 420 West Broadway. Open Wednesday evenings until 9:30.)

Louise Kramer—Lacquered-metal and clay sculptures, plus monoprints. Through March 2. (A.I.R., 97 Wooster St.)

Naomi Lazard and Bill Burke—A collaborative effort resulting in a set of graphics that are built around familiar institutional forms—a Mailgram, a subway sign, an I.B.M. card—and that incorporate many of Lazard's poems. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (O.K. Harris, 383 West Broadway.)

Tom Martin—An exhibit of oils, one of them a painting (somewhat distorted) of a movie still for "The Maltese Falcon," showing Humphrey Bogart and Mary Astor. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Hundred Acres, 456 West Broadway.)

Alan Turner—Surrealistic paintings that have a photographic quality. Through March 5. (Solway, 139 Spring St.)

Sharon Wybrants—Self-portraits executed in a variety of mediums. Through March 2. (SoHo 20, 99 Spring St. Opens at noon.)

The Drawing Center—The first exhibition of this new facility for drawings, at 137 Greene Street, demonstrates intentionally how elastic the term "drawing" has become. The show offers geometric cutouts in solid colors, by Robert Mangold; applications of crude oil and cup grease to paper, by Dorothea Rockburne; paper covered with oil paint in which rectangular forms have been incised with a nail, by Douglas Sanderson; and similar works by three other artists. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Mondays and Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 9.)

OTHER GALLERIES

Vito Acconci and Joan Jonas—A videotape program by each artist. Through Friday, Feb. 25. (Visual Arts, 209 E. 23rd St. Mondays, except Feb. 21, through Thursdays, noon to 9; Fridays, 11 to 4:30.)

Ten American Collagists—A loan show of works by artists (Romare Bearden, William Dole, Nancy Grossman, for instance) who are identified with collage. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Roko, 90 E. 10th St. Opens at noon.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Diane Arbus (1923-71)—A retrospective that consists of nearly seventy works, a number of them printed by the photographer herself. Through April 2. (Helios, 18 E. 67th St.)

Bernd and Hilla Becher—Photographs of ore-screening plants, by a team that has pursued its subject matter from the coal mines of West Virginia to the limestone quarries of England. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

Mark Cohen—Recent pictures, many of which were taken in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, last year. Through Saturday, Feb. 26. (Castelli Graphics, 4 E. 77th St.)

Evelyn Hofer / Naomi Savage—Sharply defined photographs of architectural details on buildings façades, as well as portraits and dye-transfer prints. / Photo-collages, toned-and-colored gum prints, and other works by an artist who is a niece of Man Ray. Through March 19. (Witkin, 41 E. 57th St.)

Ted Horowitz and Elizabeth M. Heyert—Candid and formal color and black-and-white portraits. Through Feb. 28. (Nikon House, 437 Madison Ave., at 50th St. Closed Saturdays.)

Marc Kaczmarek—Portraits, studies of dancers, and architectural views. Through April 30. (Studio 505, 39 Walker St., two blocks south of Canal St., between Church and Broadway. Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

William Larson / Charles Traub—Experimental works that include photographs transmitted by a teleprinter, multiple negatives transferred to metal sheets, and holograms. / Photographs of people taken on beaches and in other public places. Through March 5. (Light, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Tina Modotti (1896-1942)—The Museum of Modern Art is showing a small selection of her works taken in Mexico, about half of which are vintage prints; the remainder were printed from old negatives by Richard Benson. See below, under "Museums," for dates and times.

Nadar (1820-1910)—A show of more than fifty portraits of artists, writers, and composers is on view at the Metropolitan Museum. See below, under "Museums," for dates and times.

Dennis Stock / Mike Disfarmer (1884-1959)—Dye-transfer and black-and-white prints whose themes are taken from nature. / Photographs of townspeople and cotton farmers in Heber Springs, Arkansas, made during the

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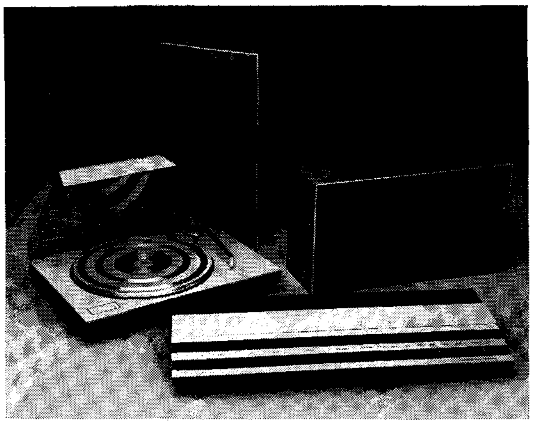

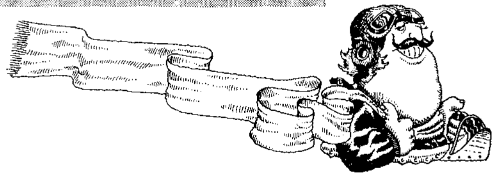

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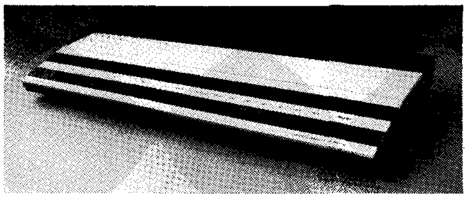

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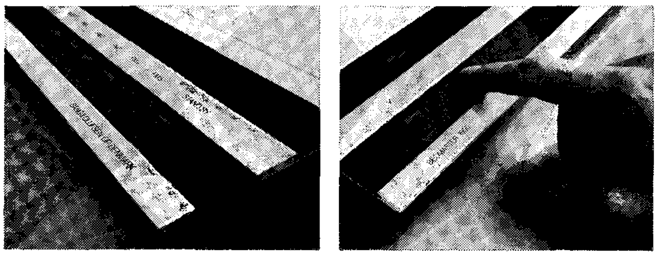

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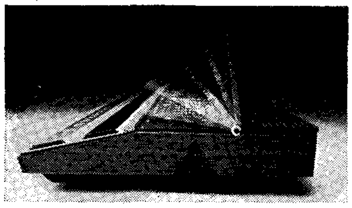

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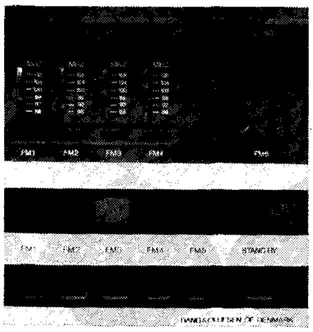

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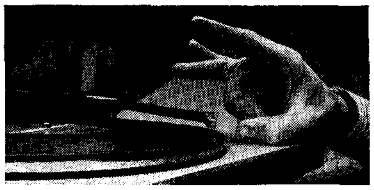

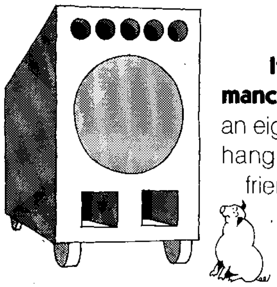

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Second World War. Through March 13. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Open Sundays.)

New York Press Photographers—The seventy-five prize-winning news photographs of the 1976 New York Press Photographers Association's annual contest. Through March 4. (New York Telephone Building, 1095 Sixth Ave., at 42nd St. Closed Saturdays.)

Group Shows—At the **carlton**, 127 E. 69th St.: Bill Brandt, Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Imogen Cunningham, and László Moholy-Nagy are among the forty photographers whose works are included in this exhibit honoring Helen Gee and the Limelight Gallery, which she founded in the early fifties. It's hard to believe that at the time a coffeehouse had to be opened on the premises to keep the gallery going. Through March 8.... **marlborough**, 40 W. 57th St.: Photographs of people taken by Robert Frank, Lisette Model, Richard Avedon, and five others. Through March 12.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A sumptuous exhibit of clothing and accessories from Russia that focusses on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and ranges from regional peasant costumes to the wedding dress of Catherine the Great.... **photography**: Nadar. Through March 27. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 8:45; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 4:45; Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—A selection of early-twentieth-century European paintings from Swiss collections features such major artists as Braque, Bonnard, Matisse, Léger, van Gogh, Modigliani, and Klee. Through March 1.... ¶ A hundred prints and a few illustrated books chosen from among acquisitions made during the last three years. Through Tuesday, Feb. 22.... ¶ A show of posters made by Henri Matisse, Saul Steinberg, Robert Indiana, Larry Rivers, and others to announce their exhibits or other events. Through March 22.... **photography**: Tina Modotti. Through April 3. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave., at 89th St.—A retrospective of the paintings, drawings, and prints of the Belgian fantasist James Ensor. Through April 10. A complementary show is at Martin Sumers Graphics, 50 W. 57th St.... ¶ Recently acquired paintings and other works, the majority by contemporary artists (Stanley Boxer, Horia Damian, and Audrey Flack, for instance) and a few by artists from earlier periods (Seurat, Dufy, Klee). Through Feb. 27.... ¶ A small exhibit of oils and works on paper (all done before 1930) by Piet Mondrian. Through April 14. (Open daily. Hours: Tuesdays, *11 to 8, with no admission* charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, and Monday, Feb. 21, from 11 to 5.)

Whitney Museum, 945 Madison Ave., at 75th St.—The first stage of a biennial survey of American paintings, sculptures, photographs, and videotapes primarily features the work of artists who have come to the public's attention in the present decade. Some of them are Pat Steir, H. C. Westermann, Duane Michals, and Elizabeth Murray. Through March 27. The second stage will open Saturday, Feb. 19. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 11 to 10, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Whitney Downtown Museum, 55 Water St., two blocks south of Wall St.—A show devoted to the nude figure in contemporary painting, sculpture, and photography. Alice Neel, Lucas Samaras, and George Segal are among the participants. Through March 3. (Open Mondays, except Feb. 21, through Fridays, 11 to 3.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—A retrospective exhibition of the paintings and drawings of French Impressionist Gustave Caillebotte. Through April 24. (The museum is open Wednesdays through Sundays, and Monday, Feb. 21. Hours: Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5; Monday, Feb. 21, from 1 to 5. The Caillebotte exhibit opens at 1:30 on Wednesdays and Thursdays.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—A travelling exhibit, from the Smithsonian Institution, of nearly two hundred art objects from Cyprus, the earliest pieces dating from the Stone Age. Through April 3. (Open daily. Hours: Weekdays, 10 to 4:45; Sundays and Monday, Feb. 21, from 11 to 5.)

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Asia House, 112 E. 64th St.—A survey of wood sculptures and decorative art objects from China and Japan dating from the fifth century B.C. to the nineteenth. Buddhist statues, carved lacquerware, burial figures, and folk carvings are among the pieces on exhibit. Through March 27. (Open daily. Hours: Weekdays, 10 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8:30; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—The opening show of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Design. Through March 2. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—An immense showing—more than nine hundred items in all—entitled "Two Hundred Years of American Illustration" and incorporating original works from every celebrated illustrator you've ever heard of—Pyle, Wyeth, Christy, Flagg, Gibson, Dunn, plus a few specials like Audubon, John Held, Jr., and James Thurber. Through April 15. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, 1 to 5; Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"American Sampler" brings together such items from the library's holdings as "Brooklyn in Winter" by Francis Guy, drawings of the American West by George Catlin, original comic-strip art for "Dick Tracy," and a model for "Orpheus" by Noguchi. Through March 30. (Open every day except Thursdays, Sundays, and Monday, Feb. 21. Hours: Weekdays, 10 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 9.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 2033 Fifth Ave., at 125th St.—Paintings on shaped canvases by Leslie Price.... ¶ Prints by Lee Paté. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 6, and Wednesday evenings until 9; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.) Both shows through Sunday, Feb. 20.

MUSIC

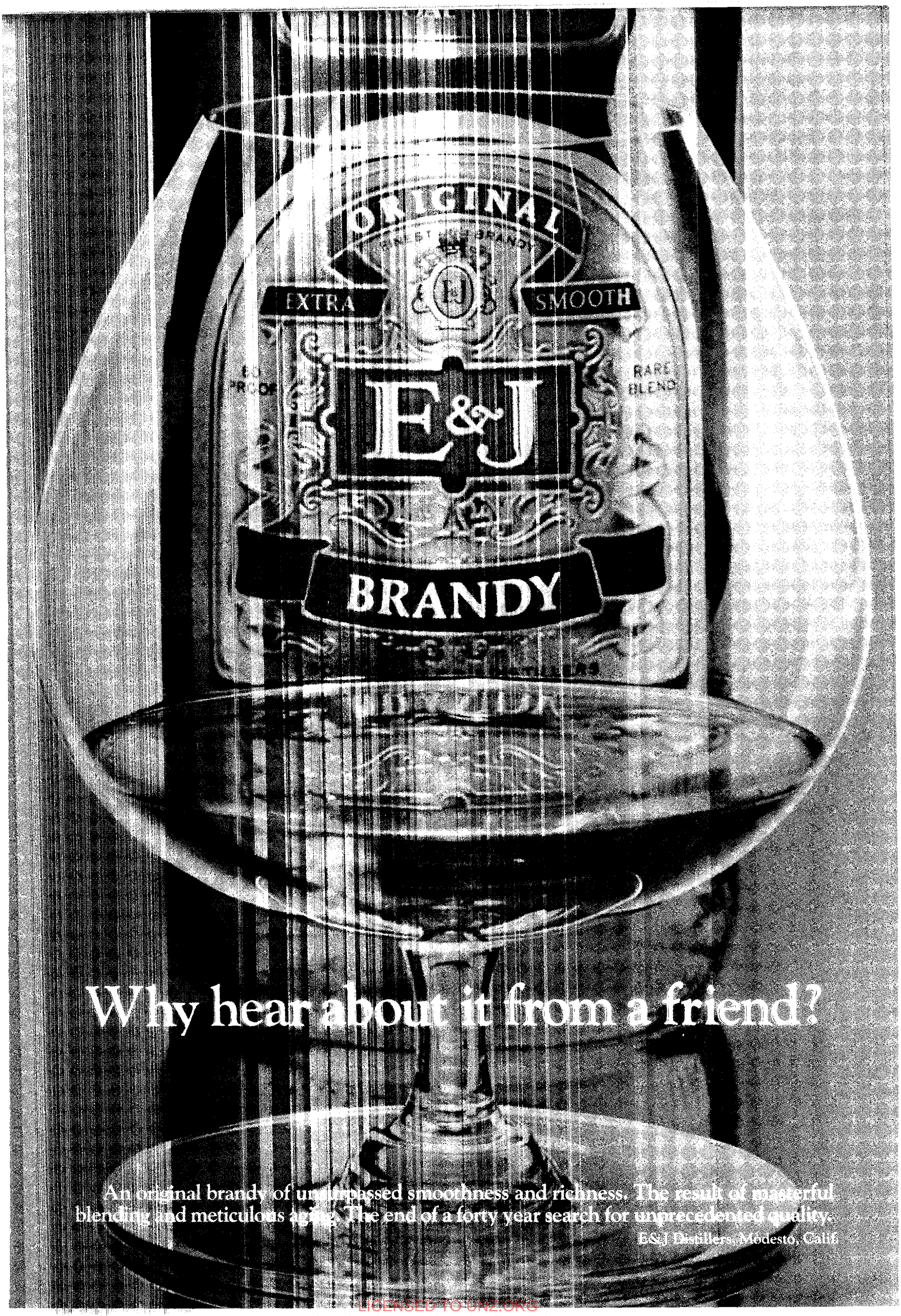
(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 580-9830, for Avery Fisher Hall TR 4-2424, for Carnegie Hall CI 7-7459, and for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911. Other box-office numbers are included in the listings.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—Wednesday, Feb. 16, at 8: "Il Trittico," consisting of three short operas—"Il Tabarro," with Hildegard Behrens, Jean Kraft, Harry Theyard, and Cornell MacNeil; "Suor Angelica," with Teresa Zylis-Gara and Fedora Barbieri; and "Gianni Schicchi," with Josella Ligi, Fedora Barbieri, Cornell MacNeil, Neil Shicoff, and Italo Tajo; conducted by James Levine.... ¶ Thursday, Feb. 17, at 8: "Le Prophète," with Marilyn Horne, Rita Shane, James McCracken, Jerome Hines, Frank Little, Morley Meredith, and Raimund Herincx; Henry Lewis.... ¶ Friday, Feb. 18, at 8: "Salome," with Leonie Rysanek, Astrid Varnay, Ragnar Ulfung, Ingvar Wixell, Kenneth Riegel, and James Morris; Erich Leinsdorf.... ¶ Saturday, Feb. 19, at 1: "Die Walküre," with Rita Hunter, Janis Martin, Mignon Dunn, James King, Norman Bailey, and Manfred Schenk; Erich Leinsdorf.... ¶ Saturday, Feb. 19, at 8: "Dialogues of the Carmelites" (in English), with Maria Ewing, Shirley Verrett, Mignon Dunn, Régine Crespin, Betsy Norden, Raymond Gibbs, and William Dooley; Michel Plasson.... ¶ Monday, Feb. 21, at 8: "Le Prophète," with Marilyn Horne, Rita Shane, James McCracken, Jerome Hines, John Carpenter, Morley Meredith, and Raimund Herincx; Henry Lewis.... ¶ Tuesday, Feb. 22, at 8: "Dialogues of the Carmelites" (in English), with Maria Ewing, Shirley Verrett, Mignon Dunn, Régine Crespin, Betsy Norden, Raymond Gibbs, and William Dooley; Michel Plasson.... ¶ Wednesday, Feb. 23, at 8: A new production of Puccini's "La Bohème," with Renata Scotto, Maralin Niska, Luciano Pavarotti, Ingvar Wixell, Paul Plishka, Allan Monk, Italo Tajo, and Andrea Velis; Thomas Schippers. (A benefit performance; for tickets, call 582-7500.)... ¶ Thursday, Feb. 24, at 7: "Die Walküre," with Rita Hunter, Leonie Rysanek, Mignon Dunn, James King, Norman Bailey, and Manfred Schenk; Erich Leinsdorf.... ¶ Friday, Feb. 25, at 8: "La Forza del Destino," with Leontyne Price, Rosalind Elias, Placido Domingo, Sherrill Milnes, Martti Talvela, and Renato Capecchi; James Levine.... ¶ Saturday, Feb. 26, at 2: "Il Trittico"—"Il Tabarro," with Hildegard Behrens, Jean Kraft, Harry Theyard, and Cornell MacNeil; "Suor Angelica," with Teresa Zylis-Gara and Fedora Barbieri; and "Gianni Schicchi," with Josella Ligi, Fedora Barbieri, Cornell MacNeil, Neil Shicoff, and Italo Tajo; James Levine.... ¶ Saturday, Feb. 26, at 8: "Le Nozze di Figaro," with Heather Harper, Judith Blegen, Maria Ewing, James Morris, Lenus Carlson, Alma Jean Smith, Shirley Love, Andrea Velis, and Renato Capecchi; Steuart Bedford.

New York City Opera—Opening performances of the season, which will continue through Sunday, May 1—Wednesday evening, Feb. 23: "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," with Beverly Sills, Diane Curry, Henry Price, Richard Fredricks, Spiro Malas, and Samuel Ramey; conducted by Sarah Caldwell.... ¶ Thursday evening, Feb. 24: "Der Fliegende Holländer," with Johanna Meier, Richard Taylor, Guillermo Sarabia, and Ara Berberian; Julius Rudel.... ¶ Friday evening, Feb. 25: "La Bohème," with Diana Soviero, Roberta Palmer, Ermanno Mauro, Pablo Elvira, Will Roy, and Robert Paul; Giuseppe Morelli.... ¶ Saturday matinée, Feb. 26: "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," with Beverly Sills, Diane Curry, Henry Price, Richard Fredricks, Spiro Malas, and Samuel Ramey; Sarah Caldwell.... ¶ Saturday evening, Feb. 26: "Die Fledermaus" (in English), with June Fiske, Gianna Rolandi, David Griffith, Charles Roe, David Holloway, Alan Baker, Richard McKee, and James Billings; Imre Pallo. (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. TR 7-4727. Evenings at 8. Matinées at 2.)

New Opera Theatre—The initial program of this new company is a triple bill staged by Ian Strasfogel: Monteverdi's "Guerramore" (with Paul Sperry, tenor, and Judith Norell, harpsichord); Janáček's "Diary of One Who Vanished" (with Joy Blackett, mezzo-soprano, and Ursula Oppens, piano); and Ligeti's "Aventures and Nouvelles Aventures" (with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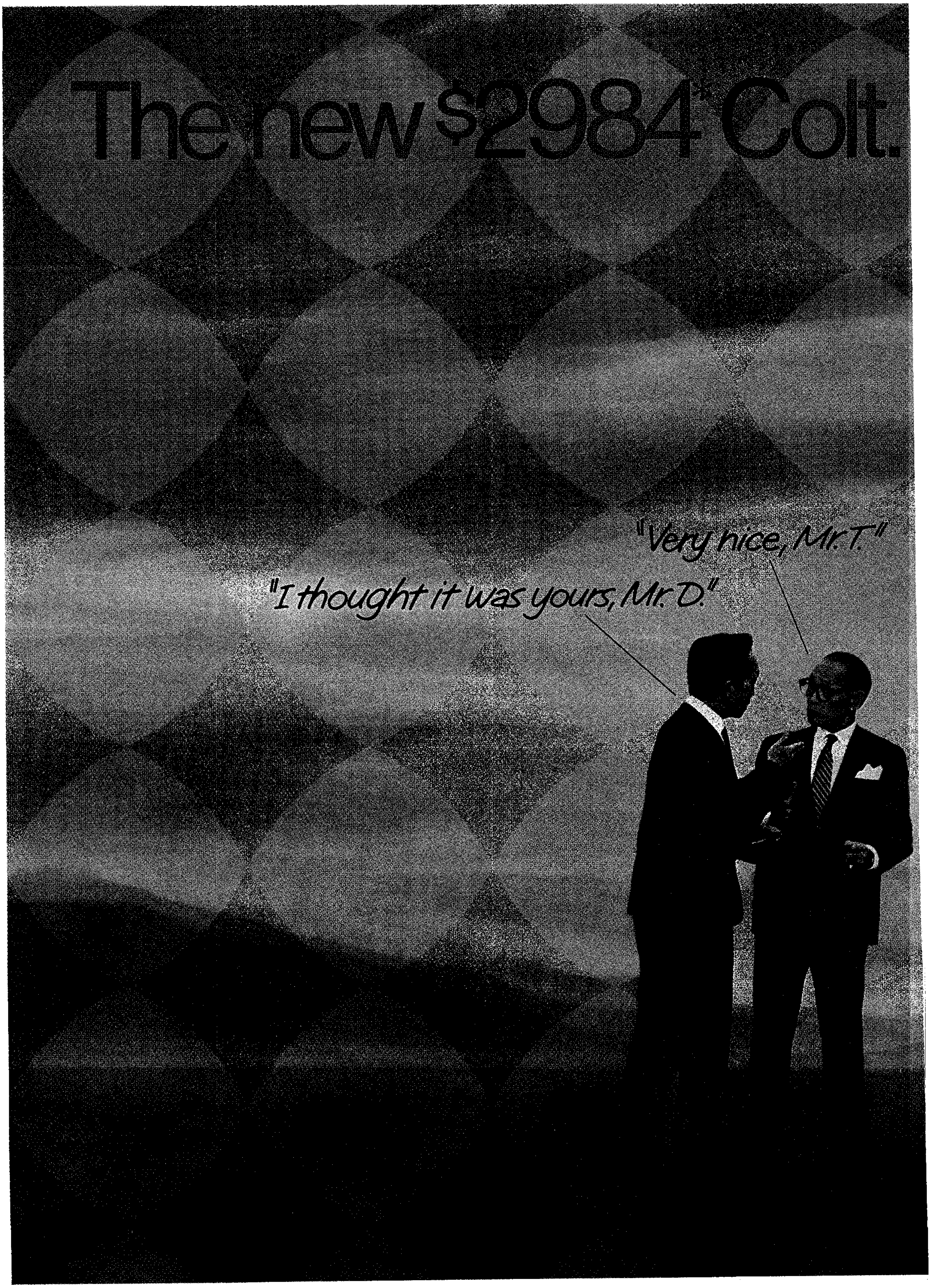
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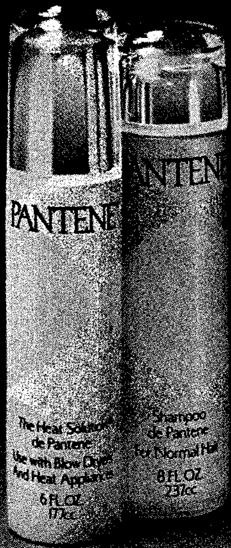

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the Speculum Musicae, conducted by David Gilbert). (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 636-4100. Friday and Saturday, Feb. 18-19, at 8, and Sunday, Feb. 20, at 2.)

Opera at the Y—Michael Feldman conducting the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble in Rieti's "The Pet Shop," with Betsy Hepburn, soprano; Judith Allen, mezzo-soprano; and Michael Best, tenor, plus Debussy's "La Boîte à Jou-Joux," with Kenneth Cooper, piano, and the Nicolo Marionettes. (Kaufmann Concert Hall, 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-6000. Thursday, Feb. 24, at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall—Pierre Boulez conducting on Thursday, Feb. 17, at 8:30; Friday, Feb. 18, at 2; Saturday, Feb. 19, at 8:30; and Tuesday, Feb. 22, at 7:30 (all with Garrick Ohlsson, piano)....¶ Klaus Tennstedt conducting Thursday through Saturday, Feb. 24-26, at 8:30, and Tuesday, March 1, at 7:30 (all with Miriam Fried, violin).

Cleveland Orchestra—At Carnegie Hall, Lorin Maazel conducting the last three in a series of concerts presenting the cycle of Beethoven symphonies and concertos. Wednesday, Feb. 16, and Friday, Feb. 18, at 8: With Emil Gilels, piano....¶ Saturday, Feb. 19, at 8: With Faye Robinson, soprano; Lili Chookasian, mezzo-soprano; Kenneth Riegel, tenor; Marius Rintzler, baritone; and the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus.

Buffalo Philharmonic—Michael Tilson Thomas conducting. (Walt Whitman Hall, Brooklyn College. 859-1180. Saturday, Feb. 19, at 8. ...¶ Carnegie Hall. Sunday, Feb. 20, at 3, with Alexis Weissenberg, piano.)

Boston Symphony—Seiji Ozawa conducting. (Carnegie Hall. Wednesday and Thursday, Feb. 23-24, at 8.)

Czech Chamber Soloists—A chamber orchestra under the direction of Miroslav Matyas. (Town Hall. JU 2-4536. Sunday, Feb. 20, at 2:30.)

Brooklyn Philharmonia—Lukas Foss conducting the third in a "Meet the Moderns" series of four concerts, this one devoted to new American music, with Paul Zukofsky, violin, and Gwendolyn Belle, mezzo-soprano. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 636-4100. Tuesday, Feb. 22, at 8.)

Clarion Concerts Orchestra—Newell Jenkins conducting a program of Vivaldi concertos, with Walter Abel, narrator; Gerald Tarack, violin; Henry Schuman, oboe; Alexander Kouguell and Chris Finckel, cello; and Kenneth Cooper, harpsichord. The final concert of the season. (Alice Tully Hall. Wednesday, Feb. 23, at 8:30.)

New and Newer Music—Arthur Weisberg conducting the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, with Barbara Martin, soprano. (New York Public Library at Lincoln Center Auditorium, 111 Amsterdam Ave., at 65th St. Thursday, Feb. 24, at 7:30. For tickets, which will not be on sale at the auditorium, call 362-1911.)

Mieczyslaw Horszowski and the Musica Aeterna Orchestra—Frederic Waldman conducting, with Mr. Horszowski, piano. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 879-5512. Saturday, Feb. 26, at 8.)

Concordia Choir—Paul J. Christiansen directing. (Alice Tully Hall. Sunday, Feb. 20, at 8.)

Amor Artis Chorale and Orchestra—Johannes Somary directing a performance of Handel's oratorio "Acis and Galatea," with Bonnie Hamilton, soprano; Charles Bressler and Dean Rhodus, tenors; and Raymond Murcell, bass. (Alice Tully Hall. Monday, Feb. 21, at 8.)

New York Choral Society—Robert DeCormier directing a performance of Handel's oratorio "Israel in Egypt," with an orchestra and soloists. (Carnegie Hall. Saturday, Feb. 26, at 8.)

RECITALS

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26

George Malcolm—Harpsichord, in the last in a series of recitals, this one an all-Bach program. (Vélez Blanco Patio, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 879-5512. Wednesday, Feb. 16, at 8.)

Guarneri Quartet and Friends—With Walter Trampler, viola, and Bernard Greenhouse, cello. (Alice Tully Hall. Wednesday and Thursday, Feb. 16-17, at 8.)

Contemporary Music of the Americas—Hilde Somer, piano, with the Dorian Woodwind Quintet and the Mohawk Trail String Quartet. (Kaufmann Concert Hall, 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-6000. Wednesday, Feb. 16, at 8.)

Peter Wolf—Harpsichord. (Carnegie Recital Hall. Thursday, Feb. 17, at 8.)

Beethoven at the Y—The Beethoven quartet cycle performed in a series of six concerts by the Quartetto Italiano and the Juilliard String Quartet. Third program by the Quartetto on Thursday, Feb. 17, at 8. (Kaufmann Concert Hall, 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-6000.)

Andres Segovia—Classical guitarist. (Avery Fisher Hall. Friday, Feb. 18, at 8.)

Kuyken Quartet—A program of baroque music. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 879-5512. Friday, Feb. 18, at 8.)

Jan DeGaetani—Mezzo-soprano, in the last in a series of concerts of vocal chamber music, with instrumentalists. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 879-5512. Saturday, Feb. 19, at 8.)

Jean-Pierre Rampal and Robert Veyron-Lacroix—Flute and harpsichord. (Kaufmann Concert Hall, 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-6000. Saturday, Feb. 19, at 8.)

Quartetto Italiano—The annual Joseph Mann Memorial Concert. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. Saturday, Feb. 19, at 8. For tickets, call 586-4680.)

Alexander Schneider, Walter Trampler, Leslie Parnas, and Stephanie Brown—Violin, viola, cello, and piano. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 741-5689. Sunday, Feb. 20, at 11 A.M.... ¶ Same program; Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 879-5512. Thursday, Feb. 24, at 8.)

Pinchas Zukerman—Violin. (Avery Fisher Hall. Sunday, Feb. 20, at 3.)

Dan Pressley—Tenor. (Carnegie Recital Hall. Sunday, Feb. 20, at 8:30.)

Daniel Adni—Piano. (Kaufmann Concert Hall, 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-6000. Tuesday, Feb. 22, at 8.)

Ensemble for Early Music—The first of two programs of French music, this one a staged performance of Guillaume de Machaut's narrative poem "Fortune's Remedy," in English. (Alice Tully Hall. Tuesday, Feb. 22, at 8.)

William Tim Read—Harpsichord. (Carnegie Recital Hall. Wednesday, Feb. 23, at 8.)

Jubal Trio—Chamber music. (Kaufmann Concert Hall, 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-6000. Wednesday, Feb. 23, at 8.)

Shirley Mathews—Harpsichord. (Carnegie Recital Hall. Thursday, Feb. 24, at 8:30.)

New York Bassoon Quartet—A program of new works. (CAMI Hall, 165 W. 57th St. JU 2-4090. Friday, Feb. 25, at 5:30.)

Vladimir Ashkenazy—Piano, in an all-Chopin program. (Carnegie Hall. Friday, Feb. 25, at 8.)

Andrée Juliette Brun—Piano. (Carnegie Recital Hall. Friday, Feb. 25, at 8.)

Sergiu Luca and Albert Fuller—The first of two concerts presenting the Bach cycle of sonatas for violin and harpsichord. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 879-5512. Friday, Feb. 25, at 8.)

Composers String Quartet—Chamber music. (McMillin Theatre, Broadway at 116th St. Friday, Feb. 25, at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Beverly Morgan, soprano; Scott Nickrenz and Walter Trampler, viola; Edward Flower, electric guitar; Karen Lindquist, harp; and others. (Alice Tully Hall. Friday, Feb. 25, at 8, and Sunday, Feb. 27, at 5.)

New Amsterdam Ensemble—A series of three all-Mozart concerts presented in a single day. (Washington Square Methodist Church, 133 W. 4th St. Saturday, Feb. 26, at 2, 5, and 8:30. Admission by contribution.)

Régine Crespin—Soprano. (Walt Whitman Hall, Brooklyn College. 859-1180. Saturday, Feb. 26, at 8.)

Nelson Freire—Piano. (Kaufmann Concert Hall, 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-6000. Saturday, Feb. 26, at 8.)

SPORTS

(The box-office number for Madison Square Garden, Eighth Ave. between 31st and 33rd Sts., is 564-4400, and for the Nassau Coliseum, Hempstead Turnpike, Uniondale, L.I., 516 794-9100.)

Professional Basketball—At MADISON SQUARE GARDEN: Knicks vs. Chicago, Wednesday, Feb. 16, at 7:30....¶ Knicks vs. Nets, Saturday, Feb. 19, at 8....¶ Knicks vs. New Orleans, Tuesday, Feb. 22, at 7:30....¶ Knicks vs. Indiana, Saturday, Feb. 26, at 8.... NASSAU COLISEUM: Nets vs. Seattle, Friday, Feb. 18, at 8:05....¶ Nets vs. Knicks, Sunday, Feb. 20, at 1:45....¶ Nets vs. Denver, Wednesday, Feb. 23, at 8:05....¶ Nets vs. Detroit, Friday, Feb. 25, at 8:05.

Hockey—At MADISON SQUARE GARDEN: Rangers vs. Detroit Red Wings, Sunday, Feb. 20, at 7:35. ... NASSAU COLISEUM (all games at 8:05): Islanders vs. Rangers, Saturday, Feb. 19.... ¶ Islanders vs. Colorado Rockies, Tuesday, Feb. 22....¶ Islanders vs. Atlanta Flames, Saturday, Feb. 26.

Racing—At AQUEDUCT: Weekdays at 12:30; through Saturday, May 21. The Ruthless, Saturday, Feb. 19, and the Grey Lag Handicap, Saturday, Feb. 26.... GARDEN STATE PARK, Cherry Hill, N.J.: Weekdays at 12:45; through Tuesday, May 31.... BOWIE, Md.: Weekdays at 1; through Saturday, March 19. The Barbara Fritchie Handicap, Saturday, Feb. 26.

Track Meet—National A.A.U. Indoor Championships. (Madison Square Garden. Friday, Feb. 25, at 7.)

Trotting—At YONKERS RACEWAY: Weeknights at 8, and Sundays at 1; through Sunday, Feb. 27. ... MEADOWLANDS RACETRACK, East Rutherford, N.J.: Weeknights at 8; through Saturday, July 30.

ET ALIA

(The New York Parks Department number to call for information about all free entertainment in the city is 472-1003.)

Poetry Readings—John Ashbery reading from his own works. (College Parlor, Barnard Hall, Broadway at 117th St. Thursday, Feb. 17, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.)...¶ Allen Ginsberg and Robert Lowell reading from their own works. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Wednesday, Feb. 23, at 8:30. Admission by contribution.)

Cat Show—Empire Cat Club. (New York City Passenger Ship Terminal, Twelfth Ave. at 49th St. Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 26-27, from 10 to 7.)

National Antiques Show—Among this year's exhibits will be the St. Vartan Cathedral Collection of illuminated manuscripts and art works; the Armenian Museum Collection of ancient coins, costumes, rugs, and tapestries; and a display of Czech carved-wooden peasant dolls. (Madison Square Garden Exposition Rotunda, Seventh Ave. at 32nd St. Saturday, Feb. 19, through Sunday, Feb. 27. Weekdays, 1 to 10; Sundays, 1 to 7.)

Auctions—At Sotheby Parke Bernet, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (Exhibition hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5.)—Wednesday, Feb. 16, at 10:15 and 2, and Thursday, Feb. 17, at 2: English and Continental silver, watches, and *objets de vertu;* from many owners....¶ Friday, Feb. 18, at 2: European works of art, from the collection of the Boston Athenaeum and from other sources.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

EAST SIDE

Art, 36 E. 8th. (GR 3-7014)
"Seven Beauties."

St. Marks Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 8th. (777-1955)
Through Feb. 22: "The Pink Panther Strikes Again" and "Where's Poppa?"
From Feb. 23: "The Enforcer" and another feature, to be announced.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (GR 5-1660)
Through Feb. 22: "The Front."
From Feb. 23: "Rocky."

Murray Hill, 160 E. 34th. (685-7652)
"Network."

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"The Cassandra Crossing."

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Twilight's Last Gleaming."

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (PL 9-1411)
"The Late Show."

Trans-Lux East, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (PL 9-2262)
"Silver Streak."

Fine Arts, 130 E. 58th. (755-6030)
Through Feb. 17: "King of Hearts."
From Feb. 18: "Face to Face."

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (EL 5-3320)
"Pumping Iron."

Baronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
"A Star Is Born."

Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
"Thieves."

R.K.O. 59th St. Twin 1, 220 E. 59th. (688-1717)
"Network."

R.K.O. 59th St. Twin 2, 220 E. 59th. (688-0750)
Through Feb. 17: "Strange Shadows in an Empty Room" and "Rape Squad."
From Feb. 18: "The Town That Dreaded Sundown."

D. W. Griffith, 235 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"The Marquise of O . . ."

Cinema I, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (PL 3-6022)
"Fellini's Casanova."

Cinema II, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (PL 3-0774)
"Harlan County, U.S.A."

Columbia I, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
"Rocky."

Columbia II, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-2720)
"The Sentinel."

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (RE 7-2622)
"Seven Beauties."

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (RE 4-0302)
"The Cookies."

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Fun with Dick and Jane."

72nd Street East, 1st Ave. at 72nd. (BU 8-9304)
Through Feb. 22: "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest."
From Feb. 23: "The Enforcer."

Trans-Lux 85th St., Madison at 85th. (BU 8-3180)
"Network."

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"A Star Is Born."

Loews Orpheum, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
"Twilight's Last Gleaming."

Loews Ciné, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (427-1332)
"The Cassandra Crossing."

86th St. East, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
"The Sentinel."

R.K.O. 86th St. Twin 1, Lexington at 86th. (289-8900)
"Silver Streak."

R.K.O. 86th St. Twin 2, Lexington at 86th. (289-8932)
"Rocky."

WEST SIDE

Waverly, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
"A Star Is Born."

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"The Last Tycoon."

Greenwich, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Through Feb. 22: "Rocky."
From Feb. 23: "Network."

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "The Seven-Per-Cent Solution."
Theatre 2: "The Marquise of O . . ."
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 17: "Guernica" and "Viva la Muerte!" From Feb. 18: "The Town That Dreaded Sundown."
Theatre 4: Through Feb. 22: "Through the Looking Glass" (X-rated). From Feb. 23: "Rocky."

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			16	17	18	19
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THE FILMS PLAYING THE REGULAR MOVIE HOUSES ARE DESCRIBED IN BRIEF IN THE SECTION BELOW

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (PL 7-2406)
"The Last Tycoon."

Playboy, 110 W. 57th. (JU 6-4448)
Through Feb. 22: "How Funny Can Sex Be?" and "My Pleasure Is My Business."
From Feb. 23: "The Enforcer" and "Freebie and the Bean."

Little Carnegie, 146 W. 57th. (246-5123)
"Bound for Glory."

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"Cousin, Cousine."

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Providence."

Embassy 72nd St., B'way at 72nd. (SC 4-6745)
"The Last Tycoon."

Loews 83rd Triplex, B'way at 83rd. (877-3190)
Theatre 1: "Rocky."
Theatre 2: "A Star Is Born."
Theatre 3: "The Cassandra Crossing."

New Yorker, B'way at 88th. (TR 4-9189)
Through Feb. 17: "Small Change" and "The Story of Adèle H."
From Feb. 18: To be announced.

Olympia, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Through Feb. 22: "The Pink Panther Strikes Again" and "Logan's Run."
From Feb. 23: "The Enforcer" and "Fighting Mad."

REVIVAL HOUSES

(These theatres are showing revivals exclusively, and for abbreviated runs. For reasons of space, or lack of it, only the films marked with a dagger are described in our "In Brief" section, further along.)

Bleecker St. Cinema, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Feb. 16: "Burn!" (1970), directed by Gillo Pontecorvo, with Marlon Brando; and "Antonio das Mortes" (1970), in Portuguese, directed by Glauber Rocha.
Feb. 17: "Last Tango in Paris" (1972), in French and English, directed by Bernardo Bertolucci, with Marlon Brando and Maria Schneider (X-rated); and "Burn!"
Feb. 18: "Before the Revolution" (†); and "Last Tango in Paris."
Feb. 19: "Mean Streets" (1973), directed by Martin Scorsese, with Robert De Niro and Harvey Keitel; and "Before the Revolution." (†)
Feb. 20: "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore" (1975), directed by Martin Scorsese, with Ellen Burstyn, Kris Kristofferson, and Alfred Lutter; and "Mean Streets."
Feb. 21: "The Mother and the Whore." (†)
Feb. 22: A program of avant-garde films by Stan Brakhage; and "Sherlock Jr." (1924), directed by, and with, Buster Keaton.
Feb. 23: "The Wild Child" (†) and "Every Man for Himself and God Against All." (†)
Feb. 24: "The Story of Adèle H." (†) and "The Wild Child." (†)

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. at 57th. (757-2131)
Feb. 16: "The Strong Man" (1926), directed by Frank Capra, with Harry Langdon; and "Hallelujah, I'm a Bum" (1933), directed by Lewis Milestone, with Al Jolson and Harry Langdon.
Feb. 17: "The Godfather, Part II" (1974), directed by Francis Ford Coppola, with Al Pacino and Robert De Niro.
Feb. 18: "The Women" (1939), directed by George Cukor, with Norma Shearer, Rosalind Russell, Joan Crawford, and Paulette Goddard; and "Two-Faced Woman" (1941), directed by George Cukor, with Greta Garbo, Melvyn Douglas, Ruth Gordon, and Constance Bennett.
Feb. 19: "Hedda" (1976), directed by Trevor Nunn, with Glenda Jackson; and "A Doll's House" (1973), directed by Patrick Garland, with Claire Bloom, Anthony Hopkins, and Denholm Elliott.
Feb. 20: "An Evening with the Royal Ballet" (†); and "Tales of Hoffmann" (1951), directed by Michael Powell, with Moira Shearer, Léonide Massine, and Robert Helpmann.
Feb. 21: "Limelight" (1952), directed by Charlie Chaplin, with Mr. Chaplin and Claire Bloom; and "Chaplin Revue," a program of three short films.
Feb. 22: "All My Sons" (†) and "The Pedestrian." (†)
Feb. 23: "Potemkin" (1925), a Russian silent film, directed by Sergei Eisenstein; and "Alexander Nevsky" (1938), in Russian, directed by Sergei Eisenstein, with Nikolai Cherkassov.
Feb. 24: "Blow-Up" (1966), directed by Michelangelo Antonioni, with Vanessa Redgrave and David Hemmings; and "Zabriskie Point" (1970), directed by Michelangelo Antonioni.

Elgin, 8th Ave. at 19th. (675-0935)
Feb. 16: "Samurai Assassin" (1965), in Japanese, directed by Kihachi Okamoto, with Toshiro Mifune; and "Illusion of Blood" (1965), in Japanese, directed by Shiro Toyoda.
Feb. 17-19: "200 Motels" (1971), with Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention; "Phantom of the Paradise" (1974), directed by Brian De Palma, with Paul Williams, William Finley, Jessica Harper, and Gerrit Graham; and "The Magic Christian" (1970), directed by Joseph McGrath, with Peter Sellers and Ringo Starr.
Feb. 20-22: "Persona" (1967), in Swedish, directed by Ingmar Bergman, with Bibi Andersson and Liv Ullmann; "The Passion of Anna" (1970), in Swedish, directed by Ingmar Bergman, with Liv Ullmann, Bibi Andersson, Max von Sydow, and Erland Josephson; and "Shame" (1968), in Swedish, directed by Ingmar Bergman, with Liv Ullmann, Max von Sydow, and Gunnar Björnstrand.
Feb. 23: "Sanjuro" (1963), in Japanese, directed by Akira Kurosawa, with Toshiro Mifune; and "Haunted Samurai" (1971), in Japanese, directed by Keiichi Ozawa.
Feb. 24: "Breakfast at Tiffany's" (†) and "Two for the Road." (†)

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
Through Feb. 19: "It Happened One Night" (1934), directed by Frank Capra, with Claudette Colbert and Clark Gable; and "Twentieth Century" (1934), directed by Howard Hawks, with John Barrymore and Carole Lombard.
Feb. 20-21: "Gilda" (†) and "Tonight and Every Night." (†)
Feb. 22-23: "Golden Boy" (†) and "My Sister Eileen." (†)
From Feb. 24: "His Girl Friday" (1940), directed by Howard Hawks, with Rosalind Russell, Cary Grant, and Ralph Bellamy; and "Theodora Goes Wild." (†)

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (222-3370)
Through Feb. 19: "2001: A Space Odyssey" (1968), directed by Stanley Kubrick, with Keir Dullea and Gary Lockwood.
Feb. 20-22: "Paths of Glory" (†) and "The Killing." (†)
From Feb. 23: "The Thief of Paris" (1967), in French, directed by Louis Malle, with Jean-Paul Belmondo; and "That Man from

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Rio" (1964), in French, directed by Philippe de Broca, with Jean-Paul Belmondo, Françoise Dorléac, and Jean Servais.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Feb. 16: "The Ghost Ship" (1944), directed by Mark Robson, with Richard Dix; and "The Day the Earth Stood Still" (1951), directed by Robert Wise, with Michael Rennie, Patricia Neal, and Hugh Marlowe.
Feb. 17: "Bitter Sweet" (1940), directed by W. S. Van Dyke, with Jeanette MacDonald, Nelson Eddy, and George Sanders; and "The Firefly" (1937), directed by Robert Z. Leonard, with Jeanette MacDonald and Allan Jones.
Feb. 18-19: "The Lady Vanishes" (1938), directed by Alfred Hitchcock, with Dame May Whitty, Margaret Lockwood, Michael Redgrave, Paul Lukas, and Cecil Parker; and "The 39 Steps" (1935), directed by Alfred Hitchcock, with Madeleine Carroll and Robert Donat.
Feb. 20-21: "Paramount on Parade" (†) and "Glorifying the American Girl." (†)
Feb. 22-23: "Wild River" (†) and "Panic in the Streets." (†)
From Feb. 24: "Follow the Fleet" (†); and "Carefree" (1938), directed by Mark Sandrich, with Ginger Rogers, Fred Astaire, Jack Carson, Luella Gear, and Ralph Bellamy.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (956-7078)—Feb. 17 at 2:30: "L'Age d'Or" (1930), in French, directed by Luis Buñuel; no English subtitles.... ¶ Feb. 17 at 6: "Song of the Scarlet Flower" (1918), a Swedish silent film, directed by Mauritz Stiller; English inter-titles.... ¶ Feb. 17 at 8:30: "His Lordship's Last Will" (1919), a Swedish silent film, directed by Victor Sjöström; English inter-titles.... ¶ Feb. 18 at 2:30: "Song of the Scarlet Flower."... ¶ Feb. 18 at 6: "L'Age d'Or."... ¶ Feb. 19 at noon: "100 Men and a Girl" (1937), directed by Henry Koster, with Deanna Durbin and Leopold Stokowski.... ¶ Feb. 19 at 2:30: "The Ingmarssons" (1919), a Swedish silent film, directed by Victor Sjöström; simultaneous translation.... ¶ Feb. 19 at 5: "Karin, Daughter of Ingmar" (1920), a Swedish silent film, directed by Victor Sjöström; simultaneous translation.... ¶ Feb. 20 at noon: "100 Men and a Girl."... ¶ Feb. 20 at 2:30: "The Treasure of Arne" (1919), a Swedish silent film, directed by Mauritz Stiller; English inter-titles.... ¶ Feb. 20 at 5: "The Blacksmith" (1922), directed by Mal St. Clair and Buster Keaton, with Mr. Keaton; and "Steamboat Bill, Jr." (1928), directed by Charles F. Riesner, with Buster Keaton.... ¶ Feb. 21 at noon: "The Dove" (1968), directed by George Coe and Anthony Lover; "La Première Nuit" (1957), directed by Georges Franju; and "Auttom 70" (1975), directed by Gyora Novak.... ¶ Feb. 21 at 2:30: "His Lordship's Last Will."... ¶ Feb. 21 at 6: "Martha Washington" (1967), directed by Walter Gutman.... ¶ Feb. 22 at noon: "The Dove," "La Première Nuit," and "Auttom 70."... ¶ Feb. 22 at 2:30: "The Treasure of Arne."... ¶ Feb. 24 at 2:30: "Alexander Nevsky" (1938), in Russian, directed by Sergei Eisenstein, with Nikolai Cherkassov; English subtitles.... ¶ Feb. 24 at 6: "The Ingmarssons."... ¶ Feb. 24 at 8:30: "Karin, Daughter of Ingmar." (A limited number of tickets are available, but only to those applying for them in person at the museum after 11 on the day of the showing. Tickets for the showings at 8:30 will not be accepted before 8.)

Whitney Museum, 945 Madison Ave., at 75th St.—Through Feb. 23: A program of video films by Acconci, Baldessari, Benglis, and Campus.... ¶ Starting Feb. 24: A program of video films by Connell, Fox, and Fried. Showings at noon, 2, and 4 (plus 6:15 and 8 on Tuesday evenings). Call desk (794-0630) for ticket information. Closed Mondays.

Anthology Film Archives, 80 Wooster St. (226-0010)—Programs by Frampton, Vertov, Smith, von Praunheim, and others. Showings Feb. 16-18 at 7 and 9:30; Feb. 19 at 2:30, 7, and 9; Feb. 20 at 9; Feb. 22 at 8; Feb. 23 at 7 and 9; and Feb. 24 at 7 and 8:30.

Film Forum, 15 Vandam St., three blocks south of Houston St., at Sixth Ave. (989-2994)—Feb. 17-20: A program of eighteen short films by Oskar Fischinger.... ¶ Starting Feb. 24: "Yesterday's Witness: A Tribute to the American Newsreel" (1975), directed by Christian Blackwood; and three short films. Showings Thursdays through Sundays at 7:30.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN THESE PAGES DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

All My Sons (1948)—Edward G. Robinson is the money-hungry industrialist who ships a batch of defective airplane-engine cylinders to the Air Force, blames his partner for the crime, and causes one of his sons, an aviator, to commit suicide out of shame. Another son, Burt Lancaster, newly returned from the war, refuses to believe in his father's guilt until overwhelmed by incriminating facts, whereupon he tries to kill the old man. Meanwhile Lancaster has fallen in love with the partner's daughter (Louisa Horton), and has also had a soggy time of it at home, owing to the iron refusal of his mother (Mady Christians) to believe in the death of his aviator brother. Arthur Miller conceived this idea-ridden melodrama, and Irving Reis directed it. Surprisingly, it does work up some energy, but by then you have to be a little saintly to care. With Howard Duff and Frank Conroy. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Feb. 22.)

Before the Revolution (1965)—A sweepingly romantic movie about a young man's rebellion against bourgeois life and his disillusion with Communism, set in Parma and written and directed by Bernardo Bertolucci at the astonishing age of twenty-two. He captures what has rarely been seen on the screen—the extravagance and poetry of youthful ardor. In Italian. (Bleecker St. Cinema; Feb. 18-19.)

Bound for Glory—As Woody Guthrie, David Carradine has an ornery intransigence that gives the film a core, and the re-creation of the late thirties is superbly lighted and shot (by Haskell Wexler). There's real love in the director Hal Ashby's staging of the incidents, and the entire film shows taste and good will. Though it doesn't build dramatically—it straggles just when you want it to soar—it's by no means a negligible piece of work. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/13/76.) (Little Carnegie.)

Breakfast at Tiffany's (1961)—Audrey Hepburn's Holly Golightly is a bit refined, and the movie goes soft and romantic, but there's some very funny stuff along the way, especially the cocktail party. With Patricia Neal, George Peppard, and Martin Balsam, and with Mickey Rooney in a wild caricature of a Japanese. Blake Edwards directed George Axelrod's adaptation of the Capote novella. (Elgin; Feb. 24.)

The Cassandra Crossing—With Sophia Loren, Richard Harris, Martin Sheen, O.J. Simpson, Lionel Stander, Ingrid Thulin, Lee Strasberg, Burt Lancaster, and Ava Gardner; directed by George P. Cosmatos. (34th St. East, Loews Ciné, and Loews 83rd Triplex.)

The Cookies—With Jean-Pierre Marielle, directed by Joel Seria. In French. (68th St. Playhouse.)

Cousin, Cousine—Jean-Charles Tacchella's cheerful film about a big family and two Rabelaisian apostates within it. In French. (Paris.)

The Enforcer—Clint Eastwood once again as Dirty Harry, the San Francisco police inspector who is a law unto himself; by now Eastwood appears to be taking Harry's saintliness so seriously that he hisses his lines angrily, his mouth pulled thin by righteousness. Directed by James Fargo, this third in the series doesn't have the savvy to be as sadistic as its predecessors; it's just limp. The film's only distinction is Tyne Daly's warm performance as the policewoman assigned to work with Harry; deliberately unglamorous, she manages to show some believably human expressions of confusion and discomfort. (1/24/77) (St. Marks Cinema, 72nd Street East, Playboy, and Olympia; starting Feb. 23.)

An Evening with the Royal Ballet (1965)—Precarious filming, at Covent Garden, of "La Valse," "Les Sylphides," and Act III of "The Sleeping Beauty," along with a totally triumphant "Le Corsaire," preserving the Fonteyn-Nureyev partnership at its peak. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Feb. 20.)

Every Man for Himself and God Against All (1975)—The story of Kasper Hauser, chained in a dungeon from infancy and fed by a black-caped man who beats him with a truncheon. When he is an adult, the man carries him to a town square and abandons him. The townspeople train him in human habits and educate him, while he tries to retain his newfound pleasure in nature. Before the issues are resolved, the caped figure returns and murders him. This Werner Herzog film, set in early-nineteenth-century Germany and based on an actual case, is a double fable, intermingling the deadening effects of bourgeois society and the cruelty of the universe. Herzog has a visionary, estranged style; everyone is alone, immobilized, slightly stiff, and the film is a succession of unbalanced, slanted images. But this style is undramatic; it's numbingly pure. You fight to keep your eyes open. In German. (10/20/75) (Bleecker St. Cinema; Feb. 23.)

Face to Face—Ingmar Bergman's relentless chronicle of the edging toward breakdown of a woman psychiatrist (Liv Ullmann). The film is a marvellously vivid and thoughtful—and, surprisingly, witty—record of an unhappy mind's oscillation between ease and agitation. In Swedish. (4/5/76) (Fine Arts; starting Feb. 18.)

Fellini's Casanova—With Donald Sutherland as Casanova, directed by Federico Fellini. (Cinema I.)

Fighting Mad—With Peter Fonda, directed by Jonathan Demme. (Olympia; starting Feb. 23.)

Follow the Fleet (1936)—Astaire and Rogers at their most buoyant. In this one, Astaire and Randolph Scott are (implausible) shipmates, and Rogers and Harriet Hilliard are (implausible) sisters. (From Hilliard's enervated performance, one would never guess that she would go on to be a TV star.) The material, derived from the play "Shore Leave" (which had earlier become the musical "Hit the Deck"), isn't as sophisticated as in the best-known Astaire-Rogers movies, but the corniness is pleasant enough, the numbers are mostly playful and fresh, and the Irving Berlin score includes "Let Yourself Go," "I'm Putting All My Eggs in One Basket," and the big finale, "Let's Face the Music and Dance." The cast includes Astrid Allwyn as the villainess bitch, and Betty Grable, Lucille Ball, and Tony Martin. Mark Sandrich directed. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; starting Feb. 24.)

Freebie and the Bean (1974)—James Caan and Alan Arkin. There's a beating or a killing or, at least, a yelling scene every couple of minutes in this spoofy slapstick farce, directed by Richard Rush and written by Robert Kaufman. The heroes—cop buddies—seem to have a license to maim and slaughter people. With Valerie Harper, Loretta Swit, Linda Marsh, Jack Kruschen, Mike Kellin, Alex Rocco, and Christopher Morley as a transvestite. (Playboy; starting Feb. 23.)

The Front—The writer, Walter Bernstein, had a nifty comedy idea—to make a movie about the blacklisting in the entertainment industry during the McCarthy era, centering on a political innocent who fronts for blacklisted writers—but he didn't develop its comic potential. Woody Allen gives the film its only spark in the role of Howie, a restaurant cashier and small-time bookie who becomes a front. The pacing of the director, Martin Ritt, is off, the sequences don't flow, and the film seems sterile, unpopulated, and flat. (10/4/76) (Gramercy; through Feb. 22.)

Fun with Dick and Jane—With George Segal and Jane Fonda, directed by Ted Kotcheff. (Loews Tower East.)

Gilda (1946)—The story is turgid, melodramatic nonsense, but Rita Hayworth is at her most sexy-masochistic, and does that marvellous fully dressed striptease as she sings "Put the Blame on Mame." With Glenn Ford and George Macready. Charles Vidor directed. (Regency; Feb. 20-21.)

Glorifying the American Girl (1929)—A dreary account of the rise of a young girl (Mary Eaton) from the sheet-music department of a big store, through the dilemmas of small-town vaudeville, to her ultimate glorification in the Ziegfeld Follies, where, finally, we get glimpses of Helen Morgan, Rudy Vallée, and Eddie Cantor, as well as of Ziegfeld himself (who also surpervised the production) and such celebrities as Mayor Jimmy Walker, Ring Lardner, Texas Guinan, Johnny Weissmuller, Otto Kahn, and Adolph Zukor. Along her interminable way, our heroine renounces love (Edward Crandall) for the headdresses and bangles of her career; the moral is that you pay a price for applause. Meanwhile, the moviegoer who wants to see how musical numbers were staged in Ziegfeld's day learns that he has to sweat it out for a few minutes of pleasure. Millard Webb directed. The songs include "At Sundown," "Blue Skies," "What Wouldn't I Do for That Man," and "I'm Just a Vagabond Lover;" Ted Shawn choreographed the ballets. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Feb. 20-21.)

Golden Boy (1939)—William Holden—young, sensitive, and handsome—as the violinist turned prizefighter, in an only semi-reprehensible version of the Clifford Odets play, directed by Rouben Mamoulian. The role of Lorna Moon was built up to be large enough for Barbara Stanwyck, and the play was softened, rearranged, and wrenched around to provide for a happy ending. Yet the Odets material still has its dramatic pull, and Lee J. Cobb as the boy's father, Sam Levene as his taxi-driver brother-in-law, and Joseph Calleia as the slimy gangster out to corrupt him bring back some of the ambience of the New York theatre in Odets' impassioned heyday. Adolphe Menjou plays the prizefight manager; with Don Beddoe, Edward S. Brophy, Frank Jenks, and Clinton Rosemond. (Regency; Feb. 22-23.)

Guernica—Arrabal's film about the bombing of Guernica and the siege of a buttressed little village in the Spanish Civil War. His heroine, played by Mariangela Melato, is a woman of feral magnificence and gifts of leadership. Arrabal uses shock as a device; perhaps shock today is as impelling a force as heretical doubts were in Galileo's time. In Italian. (6/7/76) (Quad Cinema; through Feb. 17.)

Harlan County, U.S.A.—A documentary with a great subject, and with the taste and sensitivity not to betray it. The director, Barbara Kopple, went to live among the coal miners of Harlan County, Kentucky, when they went out on strike in 1973. This film is about an underdog group with its own folk culture, based on the unending struggle with "the owners." (1/24/77) (Cinema II.)

How Funny Can Sex Be?—A eight-episode film, with Giancarlo Giannini and Laura Antonelli, directed by Dino Risi. In Italian. (Playboy; through Feb. 22.)

The Killing (1956)—Stanley Kubrick was still only twenty-seven (his early career was with *Look* as a photographer) when he made this film, and he used Lucien Ballard to photograph the story. It is a very skillful suspense film, full of nervy style and the sidelong wit about character that expanded in Kubrick's later work. Fine to see, and fun. With Sterling Hayden. (Thalia; Feb. 20-22.)

King of Hearts (1967)—Philippe de Broca makes a lulling and rather winsome period comedy about a 1918 soldier in an evacuated village now inhabited only by zoo animals and lunatics in fancy dress. With Alan Bates. In French and English. (Fine Arts; through Feb. 17.)

The Last Tycoon—Harold Pinter adapted Fitzgerald's unfinished novel about Hollywood, and Elia Kazan directed the picture, which was produced by Sam Spiegel and stars Robert De Niro as Monroe Stahr. With Jack Nicholson, Tony Curtis, Robert Mitchum, Jeanne Moreau, Ray Milland, Donald Pleasence, and Dana Andrews. The result is so enervated that it's like a vampire movie after the vampires have left. (11/29/76) (8th St. Playhouse, Guild, and Embassy 72nd St.)

The Late Show—The writer-director, Robert Benton, has followed the rules of the detective-movie genre, but he's also added something: the detective (Art Carney) is overweight, old, and scared. None of this prevents the heroine (Lily Tomlin), who hires him, from perceiving that he's different from the other men she knows. This one-of-a-kind murder mystery pays off in atmosphere, spooking us by the flip, greedy ordinariness of the evil. Eugene Roche is a fence who loves his stolen goodies; Bill Macy is a scrounging bartender; Joanna Cassidy is a lying, cheating charmer; Howard Duff is a penny-ante detective who dies muttering about the money he's going to make; and John Considine is a sleekly handsome strong-arm man. They're all originals. (2/7/77) (Sutton.)

Logan's Run—A sci-fi fable, directed by Michael Anderson, which says that three centuries from now we shall be dwelling under opaque, hermetically sealed domes set down in the midst of devastation. Peter Ustinov plays the only visible outside citizen, an old man living in the Capitol, surrounded by the refuse of the past. (7/5/76) (Olympia; through Feb. 22.)

The Marquise of O . . .—Eric Rohmer's word-for-word, gesture-for-gesture transcription of the 1808 Heinrich von Kleist novella manages to miss the spirit just about completely. A bold, funny story becomes a formal, tame film—it's like a historical work re-created for educational television. Edith Clever is skilled and likable as the Marquise, but the droopy Bruno Ganz is miscast as the rapist Count. In German. (10/25/76) (D.W. Griffith, and Quad Cinema.)

The Mother and the Whore (1973)—This controversial three-hour-and-thirty-minute film, produced, written, and directed by Jean Eustache, is about the aging young of the Left Bank, who live in an atmosphere of apocalyptic narcissism. It is about the disaffection of those who are stranded in a confusion of personal freedom and social hopelessness. Eustache's method resembles the static randomness of the Warhol-Morrissey pictures, but the randomness here is not a matter of indifference; it's a conscious goal. The actors—Jean-Pierre Léaud, Bernadette Lafont, and Françoise Lebrun—were not allowed to deviate from the script, yet Eustache wants the look of chance. He tries to push viewers beyond patience—to rub our noses in his view of reality. Implicitly, he is saying, "I'm going to show you more of the tormented soul than anybody has ever shown you before." This soul belongs to a poor young nurse named Veronika, and the picture stands or falls on the viewer's attitude toward her recital of her sexual humiliations and her loathing of sex without love. In French. (Bleecker St. Cinema; Feb. 21.)

My Sister Eileen (1942)—Ruth McKenney's *New Yorker* stories about her and her younger sister's experiences in Greenwich Village were turned into a Broadway hit, and then into this less than dazzling romantic comedy (and later into a Broadway musical, which was also filmed, in 1955). As Ruth, leggy Rosalind Russell is too boisterously aware that she's the life of the party, and as Eileen, Janet Blair is very pretty but not much else. (The actual Eileen McKenney married Nathanael West and died with him in an automobile crash in 1940.) Alexander Hall directed. With Brian Aherne. (Regency; Feb. 22-23.)

Network—Television, Paddy Chayefsky says, is turning us into morons and humanoids, people have lost the ability to love. The cast of this messianic farce includes Faye Dunaway, William Holden, Peter Finch, Robert Duvall, and Ned Beatty, and they all take turns yelling at us soulless masses. Sidney Lumet directed. (12/6/76) (Murray Hill, R.K.O. 59th St. Twin 1, and Trans-Lux 85th St. . . . ¶ Greenwich; starting Feb. 23.)

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975)—Smashingly effective version of Ken Kesey's novel about a rebel outcast (Jack Nicholson) who is locked in a hospital for the insane. Louise Fletcher is Nurse Ratched, and Will Sampson is Chief Broom. Miloš Forman's intelligent, tentative direction lacks the excitement of movie art, but the story and the acting make the film emotionally powerful. (12/1/75) (72nd Street East; through Feb. 22.)

Panic in the Streets (1950)—Elia Kazan took a fairly conventional thriller script and made a tense, high-powered movie of it. Seeing this film, one wouldn't know that he had ever worked in the theatre: everything is kept moving, in a nervous, edgy way, yet the performances are never sacrificed to the action. The setting is the New Orleans waterfront; a murder victim is discovered to be carrying plague, and a Public Health doctor (Richard Widmark) and a city detective (Paul Douglas) hunt for everybody who had come into contact with him. Mean Jack Palance (then billed as Walter Jack Palance) and frightened, sweaty Zero Mostel are the thugs they're after. With Barbara Bel Ged-

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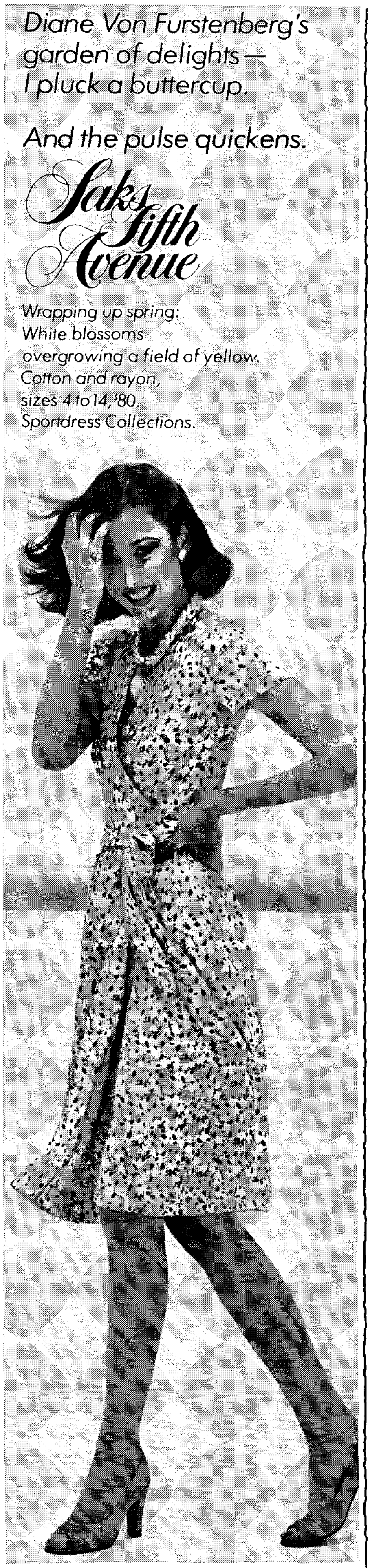
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des, who is exceedingly likable as Widmark's wife, Tommy Rettig as their son, and Alexis Minotis. Daniel Fuchs adapted the script, and Joe MacDonald shot the picture in and on actual bars and wharfs. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Feb. 22-23.)

PARAMOUNT ON PARADE (1930)—A lavish all-star musical revue, directed by Dorothy Arzner, Ernst Lubitsch, Rowland V. Lee, Edward Sutherland, and others, and supervised by Elsie Janis. The numbers include Ruth Chatterton singing "My Marine" to a quartet that includes Fredric March; Clara Bow, with Jack Oakie, and Skeets Gallagher, in "I'm True to the Navy Now;" Helen Kane as a schoolteacher singing "What Did Cleopatra Say?" to the children, who reply "Boop Boopa Doop;" William Powell as Philo Vance and Clive Brook as Sherlock Holmes in "Murder Will Out." Among the other stars are Nancy Carroll, Maurice Chevalier, Nino Martini, Jean Arthur, Gary Cooper, Fay Wray, Lillian Roth, Dennis King, Kay Francis, and Buddy Rogers. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Feb. 20-21.)

PATHS OF GLORY (1957)—Stanley Kubrick's film about the First World War. The issues were simpler, it's true, but nothing that Kubrick does is ever unsophisticated or without an echoing shrewdness. (Thalia; Feb. 20-22.)

THE PEDESTRIAN (1974)—Maximilian Schell takes this year's Stanley Kramer Prize for a Movie on the Theme of War Guilt Which Confuses More Issues Than It Raises. The protagonist (Gustav Rudolf Sellner) is a powerful industrialist who is exposed as a Second World War Lieutenant Calley, responsible for the massacre of an entire Greek village. In writer-director Schell's hazy reasoning, however, the industrialist shouldn't really feel bad; nobody in particular is guilty, because everybody is guilty. The film has been praised in this country as if it were a deep probe into serious issues; no doubt, it can be praised in Germany as a very comforting view. Schell loves fanciness and abstractions and imprecision; this film is about so many things that it's finally not about anything. Sellner has a strong presence and holds the camera; Schell turns up in a minor role, and so does the English director Peter Hall. In one clumsily gratuitous sequence, Peggy Ashcroft, Elisabeth Bergner, and Françoise Rosay appear, along with several other famous actresses, and are shamefully wasted. In German. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Feb. 22.)

THE PINK PANTHER STRIKES AGAIN—Inspector Clouseau's clenched-jaws politesse is a joke that has run its course. Playing the role for the fourth time, Peter Sellers is required to imitate himself, and after the first half hour or so, the film loses momentum. Directed by Blake Edwards. (1/17/77) (St. Marks Cinema, and Olympia; through Feb. 22.)

PROVIDENCE—Alain Resnais's intricately planned Freudian-puzzle movie, mostly set inside the mind of a dying writer (John Gielgud). Alone at night, in pain, he drunkenly plots a novel about the members of his family (Dirk Bogarde, Ellen Burstyn, David Warner, Elaine Stritch). The movie is peculiarly fastidious and static; you feel as if it were going to dry up and blow away. With a longer death scene than Camille's, Gielgud is the only one who looks alive. David Mercer wrote the script. (1/31/77) (Cinema 3.)

PUMPING IRON—About the art and sport of body-building, with Arnold Schwarzenegger. Directed by George Butler and Robert Fiore. (Plaza.)

RAPE SQUAD—With Jo Ann Harris, Peter Brown, and Jennifer Lee; directed by Robert Kelljchian. (R.K.O. 59th St. Twin 2; through Feb. 17.)

ROCKY—A low-budget winner—a romantic fable about a Philadelphia palooka who gains his manhood, written by and starring muscle-bound Sylvester Stallone, who is repulsive one moment, noble the next. The picture is poorly made, yet its naïve, emotional shamelessness is funny and engaging. John G. Avildsen directed; with Talia Shire, Carl Weathers, Burt Young, and Burgess Meredith. (11/29/76) (Columbia I, R.K.O. 86th St. Twin 2, and Loews 83rd Triplex. . . . ¶ Greenwich; through Feb. 22. . . . ¶ Gramercy, and Quad Cinema; starting Feb. 23.)

THE SENTINEL—With Chris Sarandon and Cristina Raines, directed by Michael Winner. (Columbia II, and 86th St. East.)

SEVEN BEAUTIES (1976)—Lina Wertmüller's Everyman jamboree, full of garbled ideas, cruelty, moist wistfulness, pious moralizing, and appeals to coarse prejudices. With Giancarlo Giannini. In Italian. (2/16/76) (Art, and Beekman.)

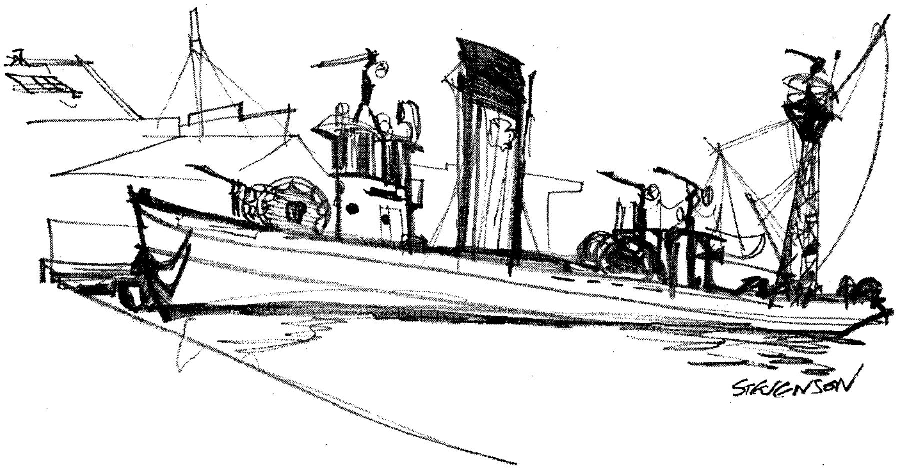
THE SEVEN-PER-CENT SOLUTION—A civilized light entertainment, with Nicol Williamson's Sherlock Holmes and Alan Arkin's Sigmund Freud pooling their deductive skills to solve the mysterious kidnapping of one of Freud's patients (Vanessa Redgrave). Chief among the performers, who seem to be having an actors' holiday, is Laurence Olivier, in high form as the criminal mastermind Prof. Moriarty; the others include Robert Duvall as Dr. Watson, Joel Grey, Anna Quayle, Samantha Eggar, Georgia Brown, Jeremy Kemp, and Charles Gray. Nicholas Meyer adapted his 1974 best-seller; Herbert Ross directed. (11/1/76) (Quad Cinema.)

SILVER STREAK—Jill Clayburgh, Gene Wilder, and Richard Pryor are nineteen-seventies performers trapped in this fake thirties mystery-comedy, which is so inept you can't even get angry: it's like the imitations of sophisticated entertainment that high-school kids put on. Arthur Hiller directed, lamely; Colin Higgins wrote the script, which features pathetic double entendres. (1/17/77) (Trans-Lux East, and R.K.O. 86th St. Twin 1.)

SMALL CHANGE—Truffaut's series of sketches on the general theme of the resilience of children turns out to be that rarity—a poetic comedy that's really funny. There's a serious side (the story of a mistreated boy) that's a failure, and Truffaut's view of childhood innocence has elements of middle-class preciousness, but the jokes make the film worth seeing. In French. (10/4/76) (New Yorker; through Feb. 17.)

A STAR IS BORN—The Streisand-Kristofferson musical version—sentimental, without being convincing for an instant. Those in the mood for an emotional extravaganza can swoon, weep, and giggle, too. Directed by Frank Pierson. (1/10/77) (Baronet, U.A. East, Waverly, and Loews 83rd Triplex.)

THE STORY OF ADÈLE H. (1975)—François Truffaut's finest film since "Jules and Jim," and his most passionate work. The film is damnably intelligent—almost frighteningly so,



like some passages in Russian novels which strip the characters bare. And it's deeply, disharmoniously funny—which Truffaut has never been before. The story, about romantic love fulfilled by self-destruction, is based on the journals of Adèle, the daughter of Victor Hugo; she's played by the prodigious young actress Isabelle Adjani. In French. (10/27/75) (New Yorker; through Feb. 17. . . . ¶ Bleecker St. Cinema; Feb. 24.)

Strange Shadows in an Empty Room—With Martin Landau, Stuart Whitman, John Saxon, and Gayle Hunnicutt; directed by Martin Herbert. (R.K.O. 59th St. Twin 2; through Feb. 17.)

Theodora Goes Wild (1936)—Irene Dunne was better in comedy than in her smug, sacrificial roles, and in this movie and "The Awful Truth" she was at her best. She's too bright—she's almost shrill in her brightness—and she does something clever with her teeth that makes one want to slap her, but she has energy, and this comedy about a small-town girl who writes a best-seller and charms a city sophisticate (Melvyn Douglas) has a corny vitality that almost passes for wit. It was a hugely successful popular entertainment. Richard Boleslavski directed, from Sidney Buchman's screenplay. With Thomas Mitchell and Spring Byington. (Regency; starting Feb. 24.)

Thieves—With Marlo Thomas and Charles Grodin, directed by John Berry. (Coronet.)

Tonight and Every Night (1945)—Elaborate, dull Columbia musical starring Rita Hayworth, smiling about nothing, and with Marc Platt, Janet Blair, and Lee Bowman. Directed by Victor Saville; mediocre score by Sammy Cahn and Jules Styne. (Regency; Feb. 20-21.)

The Town That Dreaded Sundown—With Ben Johnson and Andrew Prine, directed by Charles B. Pierce. (R.K.O. 59th St. Twin 2, and Quad Cinema; starting Feb. 18.)

Twilight's Last Gleaming—With Burt Lancaster, directed by Robert Aldrich. (Eastside Cinema, and Loews Orpheum.)

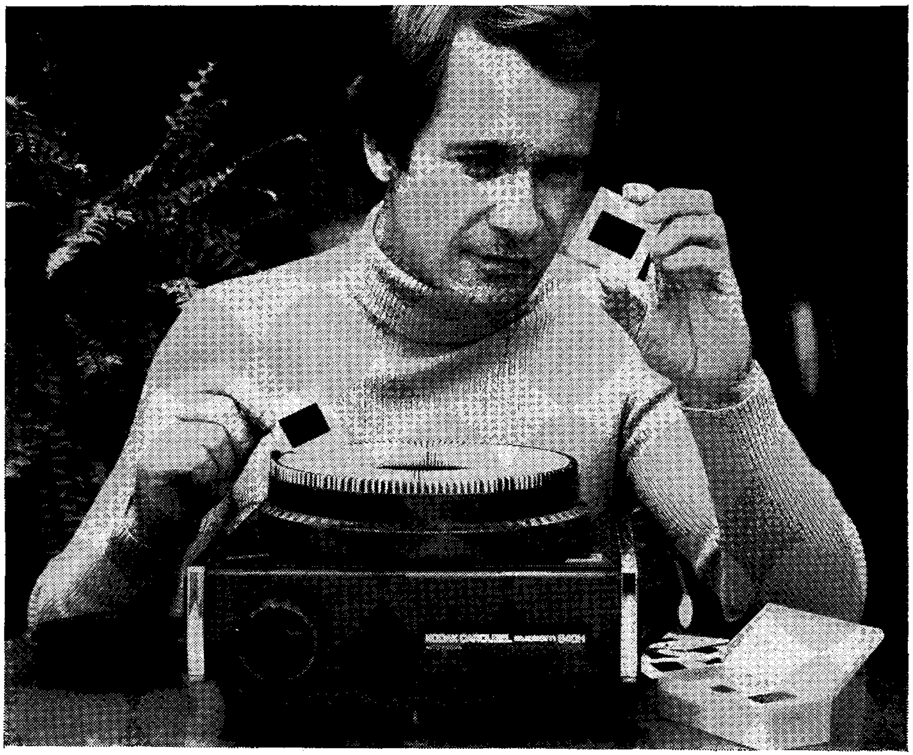
Two for the Road (1967)—Glossy comedy by Stanley Donen about two lovers, though not about love, which isn't in his range. Frederic Raphael did the competent but unfelt screenplay, and the cast includes Audrey Hepburn and Albert Finney. Finney looks as if he is in a role too tight for him. (Elgin; Feb. 24.)

Viva la Muerte! (1971)—Directed by Fernando Arrabal. In French. (Quad Cinema; through Feb. 17.)

Where's Poppa? (1970)—This Carl Reiner comedy about a lawyer (George Segal) who can't get loose from his mother (Ruth Gordon) doesn't completely work—maybe because the mother has been made into a senile psychopath instead of a sly, possessive witch, and so the satirical point gets confused. But it has so much energy that it's intermittently very funny, and Reiner has directed some graceful scenes between Segal and the charming Trish Van Devere. (St. Marks Cinema; through Feb. 22.)

The Wild Child (1970)—François Truffaut's film, set in the late seventeen-nineties, about a doctor (played by Truffaut himself) who grows passionately interested in teaching human skills to a boy who has spent eight or nine years learning to live like an animal in the forest. The picture is precise, moving, elegantly speculative. In French. (Bleecker St. Cinema; Feb. 23-24.)

Wild River (1960)—This melodrama, directed by Elia Kazan, bears a mixed-up load of social significance, and it was a box-office dud. The only thing that gives it interest is the peculiarly wrongheaded approach to message material. There were nine different versions of the script; the final one was by Paul Osborn, taken from two novels, one by William Bradford Huie and the other by Borden Deal. The time is early in the New Deal era. Montgomery Clift—constantly looking perplexed—is the T.V.A. official sent to vacate Jo Van Fleet, an irascible eighty-year-old widow who is sitting tight in an island home that is about to be engulfed by the waters of a T.V.A. dam. He has an affair with another widow—her grandniece (Lee Remick)—and gets in bad with the nearby townsfolk by hiring Negroes at five dollars a day when the local price is two. He triumphs eventually, and lessons are learned by all. With Barbara Loden, Bruce Dern, Jay C. Flippen, Robert Earl Jones, Albert Salmi, as the gas-station operator who keeps stirring people up against Clift, and Pat Hingle, as the narrator. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Feb. 22-23.)



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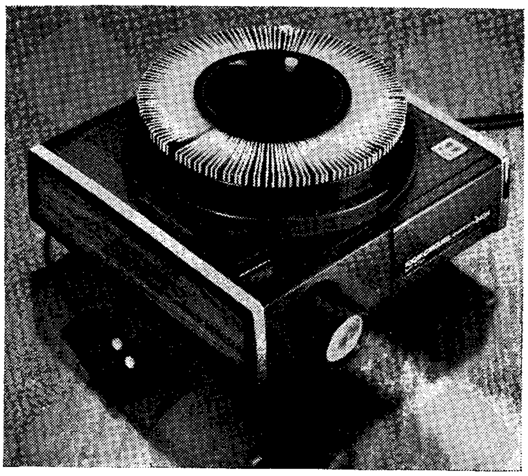

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THE
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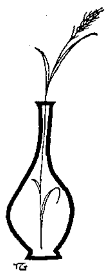
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

IN an interview the other evening with Benjamin Bradlee, the executive editor of the Washington *Post*, Martin Agronsky, on the public-television program "Agronsky at Large," remarked that the *Post* and the New York *Times* were generally thought to be the two most "powerful" newspapers in the United States, and went on to ask Bradlee whether the *Post* was "on a peer level" with the *Times*. Bradlee, forgoing any comment on the premise of Agronsky's question—that the success of newspapers could be measured in terms of power—responded as though the question had concerned the excellence of the two publications, and graciously said that, although he liked to think that when the two newspapers were pitted against each other in the reporting of a major story his own would provide the superior coverage, he had to admit that he sometimes looked on a story in the *Times* with professional envy. At this point in the discussion, we felt like jumping in with a few remarks of our own, for we happen to have some strong views on the question of the relationship of journalism to power. In our opinion, power is the last thing that a newspaper should aim for. Certainly it is the last thing that a newspaper is ever likely to attain. News stories can, of course, have large political consequences. Bob Woodward's and Carl Bernstein's investigation of the Watergate break-in for the *Post*, for example, apparently had a good deal to do with President Nixon's fall from office. But did this mean that Woodward and Bernstein had engaged in the exercise of great power? To wield power is to exercise discretionary authority over events. It is to determine that ten billion dollars will be spent to create jobs rather than five billion dollars, that B-52s will or will not bomb a foreign country, that one's political opposition will or will not be thrown into jail. But Woodward and Bernstein exercised no such discretion. When they set to work on their story, they had no way of knowing what consequences would flow from their findings. Much less were they in a position to actively seek those consequences. Rather, they had to pursue the trail of the evidence single-mindedly, wherever it might lead. It was not within their power to find that the trail led to anyone other than the chiefs of the Committee for the Re-Election of the President, then to the inner circle of the President's White House staff, and, finally, to the President himself, and thus choose which powerful politicians would topple. They were not at liberty to discover the facts to be other than what they were. Although they, like most people, were bound to have their likes and dislikes among politicians, they could not let those preferences influence their findings without jeopardizing the value of the findings. In a free country, facts are powerful. But it is not reporters who wield that power. Indeed, when reporters begin to interest themselves in power, and begin to consider themselves the equals of people who really are powerful, like Presidents, senators, and representatives, they are in danger of losing their effectiveness altogether. To our mind, it is endlessly instructive in the ways of journalism that the Watergate story was broken by two metropolitan-desk reporters, who had no experience in covering national politics, while scores of White House reporters, who were close to the seat of power, were somehow paralyzed.



If reporters are powerless, in the strict sense of the term, are editorial writers, then, the powerful ones at newspapers? It is true that polemical writing can attempt to give the reader a push in one direction or another, and that in that sense an editorialist has a latitude of discretion which a reporter lacks. But if this discretion can be called power at all, it is the very palest sort of power. The editorialist has only the art of persuasion at his disposal, and persuasion is notoriously chancy, for ultimately it is up to the reader whether or not he will lend his sympathy to the argument. The so-called power of the editorialist is therefore a borrowed power. The reader may lend it during his perusal of one paragraph and withdraw it as he reads the next, or he may withhold it altogether. The exercise of real power works in an entirely different way: if Congress passes and the President signs a law, it is not up to the citizen whether or not he will obey; if the President orders a soldier into battle, it is not up to him whether or not he will go. Compared to facts, the opinions of editorialists are probably of small consequence. No number of editorials could have led to President Nixon's resignation from office. Only a fact—in this case, the one known as "the smoking gun," which turned out to be President Nixon's order to H. R. Haldeman, the White House chief of staff, to have the F.B.I. call off its investigation into certain areas of Watergate—could have done that.

The political weakness of opinion as opposed to fact points to a danger that is likely to arise when newspapers begin to regard themselves as powerful. Politicians know very well that they have less to fear from opinion than from fact, and therefore they would often like to persuade the public that all facts are mere opinions in disguise. Richard Nixon, for one, unquestionably wanted the public to believe that. He knew that if the facts published in the Washington *Post* could somehow be misrepresented as expressions of someone's low opinion of him, they could be brushed aside. Nor was it any accident that he and Vice-President Agnew ceaselessly warned the public against the "power" of the press. For implicit in the idea that the press was powerful was the idea that the stories in the press were only a reflection of prevailing opinion in certain political circles, rather than a reflection of the truth. A corollary of this view was President Nixon's idea that all Presidents had done what he had done, and that the press, in an unfair, malicious exercise of its power, was singling him out for special attention. He also certainly knew something about the press which newsmen should never forget: that when newspapers come to be seen as centers of power, then government may find it easier to use instruments of real power—instruments of intimidation, and even of force—against them. And in that sort of struggle even the most "powerful" newspaper in the country, whichever one that might be, would quickly discover just how little power it really had.

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Dough

DURING the Aztec Festival held one recent Saturday at the Center for Inter-American Relations—a building, at Park Avenue and Sixty-eighth Street, that usually functions as a gathering place for thinkers and problem solvers who have a special interest in how the Americas (North, Central, South) get along together—anyone who didn't want to tour the Aztec stone-sculpture exhibition on the ground floor or watch films called "Viva Mexico" and "Pedro Linares: Folk Artist" on the third floor could make what were called dough sculptures in a kitchen on the second floor. In their heyday—the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—the Aztecs fashioned religious icons out of a mixture of cornmeal and a sacred grain made from an herb called amaranth, and then, in communion fashion, ate them. (According to the orthodox Aztecs, an ideal dough sculpture was a facsimile of a god with goggle eyes and fangs or a goddess with a tassled headdress.) Because of a local amaranth shortage, however, the organizers of the Aztec Festival had to substitute gingerbread for the sacred dough. Perhaps as a consequence, most of the dough sculptors proved to be children.

"It's a kind of dough that will remain intact for years," said Diana Fane, a graduate student in art history at Columbia, who was supervising the dough-sculpture operation. "For any of the children who are interested, I've drawn a picture of an Aztec goddess holding ears of corn and wearing a headdress that represents a temple. They can copy that in gingerbread if they want to. But the Aztecs created images from their world, and I guess most of the children will create images from theirs."

As Mrs. Fane shuttled trays between the worktable and the oven, we saw gingerbread hearts and monsters and snowmen and dogs but not many goddesses holding ears of corn and wearing temple-shaped headdresses. A few of the sculptors, though, were making an effort to turn out designs that were reasonably Aztec-inspired. Robert Perlman, a nine-year-old who told us that his class at the Village Community School has been studying Aztec culture recently, shaped a circular piece of dough, topped it with a coiled serpent, and equipped the serpent's mouth with two sunflower seeds that made a convincing-looking pair of fangs. "This serpent is important because it's one of the main animals of Mexico," said Robert. "I've already seen the sculptures downstairs. The show mainly has a lot of gods and sacrificial vessels."

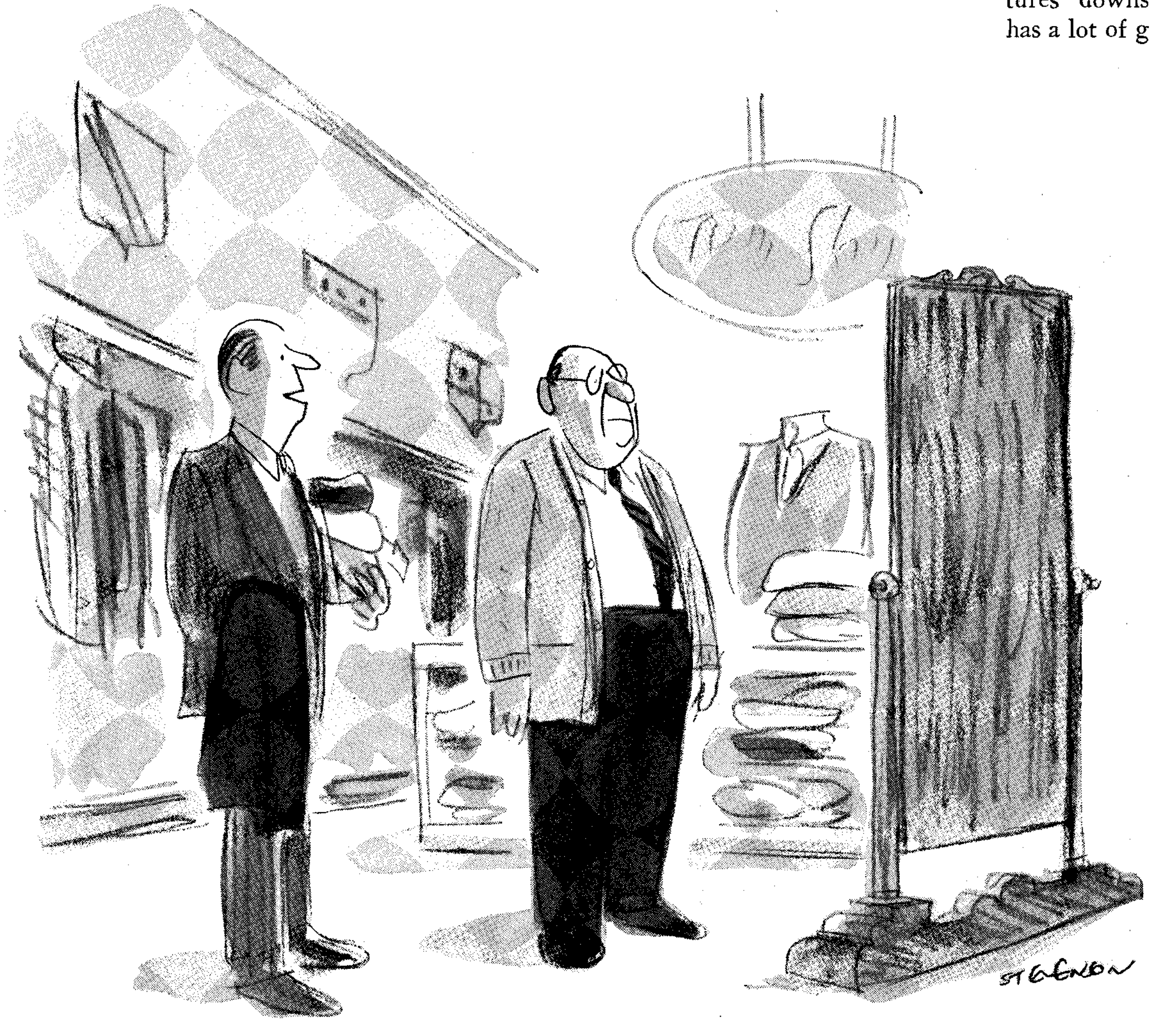
Nearby, Maren Handler carefully labored over a horse's head flattened on a piece of waxed paper. Because it was so finely sculptured, she had trouble removing it from the paper without upsetting the details of the horse's mane.

"She decided to make the horse instead of just any design because she's past the age for making those other things," said her mother, Roberta Handler. She added that Maren was twelve.

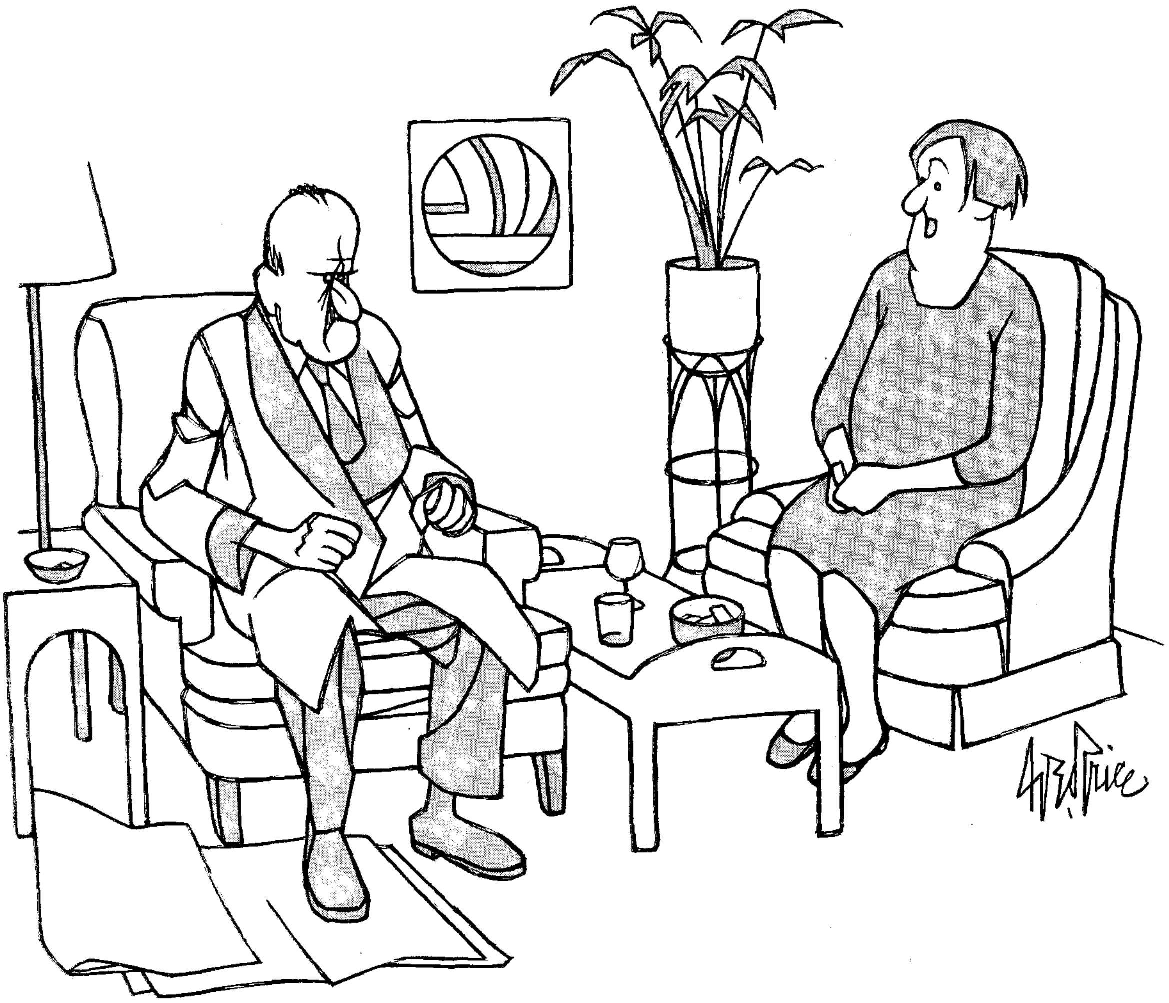
"Don't you like abstract art?" we asked Maren, but she was apparently too busy to answer.

"Oh, no," said Mrs. Handler. "She's very fond of reality."

We wandered out of the kitchen and into a large room where two assembly lines—one for calendar-stone relief rubbings and the other for gods' eyes—were heavily patronized. The first person we met was



"I wouldn't worry about it, sir. You were wearing cardigan sweaters long before he was."



"Do you mind terribly if we end another evening on a sour note?"

Leslie Stone, aged eleven, whose father, Roger, is the president of the Center for Inter-American Relations. "And that's my mother," she said, pointing to a woman standing a few feet away. "She usually works at the Museum of Natural History, but today she's the lady having frustrations with kids who can't do gods' eyes." Leslie explained that gods' eyes are made by crossing two sticks perpendicularly and binding them with colored yarn or string. The string is wound across and around each spine until a square design evolves.

"Are gods' eyes something that anyone should be able to make?" we asked.

Leslie sighed impatiently and said, "Well, it's just that they're *very* easy."

She then led us to the gods'-eyes station and, in a couple of minutes, wove colored thread around a pair of toothpicks until she had created the eye of a miniature deity. Whenever she reached the end of a piece of thread, she sealed it in place with a touch of Elmer's glue. Looking around the table, we noticed that almost as much glue was inadvertently landing in children's mouths and hair as was being properly applied to the gods' eyes. This made us wonder how many of the gingerbread sculptures would survive across the years for ornamental purposes and how many would be eaten before dinner.

Back in the kitchen, we sought to broach the subject with Ilana Halperin, who is three years old and has long light-brown hair. She was busy decorating an odd-shaped piece of dough with raisins, sunflower seeds, and small bits of artificially colored dried fruit. "What's that supposed to be?" we asked.

"A cookie," said Ilana.

Beautiful White Swan

"I WANT you to come downtown with me today," the old curmudgeon said one Tuesday noon. "I want to enlist you in a cause." Whereupon we set off for the Downtown Athletic Club, just north of the Battery, on the Hudson, and there reported for duty in the Governors Room, on the thirty-first floor, whose big windows afforded a magnificent view of the (alas!) ship-free New York Harbor. There was a small bar and a table set for what was obviously to be a small and uncrowded luncheon. The old curmudgeon introduced us to, among others, Alfred Van Santvoord Olcott, Jr., of the fifth generation of a family that was deeply involved with steamboating on the Hudson River for a matter of a hundred and twenty-three years; Frank Braynard, who is one of the founders of the South Street Seaport and, more important, was the organizer of Operation Sail; William H. Ewen, president of the Steamship Historical Society of America, down from Rhode Island for the day; and Professor Stephen Jacobs, (Architecture), a historic-preservation buff down from Cornell University for the day. The old curmudgeon began telling Frank Braynard that Op Sail was the greatest thing that had happened to New York City since the Hudson-Fulton Celebration.

"That was 1909," said Mr. Braynard.

"Yes," said the curmudgeon. "With practically the entire United States Navy, and a reproduction of Robert Fulton's steamboat, the first to ply the Hudson River."

"It was the North River Steam Boat," Braynard said, "though today everybody thinks Fulton's boat was named the Clermont."

Alfred Van Santvoord Olcott, Jr., joining us, said, "One of the finest ships of my family's Hudson River Day Line, which we finally had to sell, was named after Robert Fulton. She's gone now, and so is almost every ship we ever had, including our flagship, the Washington Irving, one of the fastest vessels on this country's inland waterways, and a gem. She was licensed to carry six thousand passengers. She went down within sight of this building when she was rammed in 1926 by an oil barge. We got all but three of the passengers off safely. My family's heart was broken."

"Mine, too," said the curmudge. "I attended her launching, in Camden, New Jersey, in 1913, when I was only fourteen years old, but my shrieks of excitement were drowned out by the ululations of a posse of redheads, an all-girl contingent from Washington Irving High School."

"Yes," said Olcott. "We had planned to invite the entire student body of the high school, until we found out how large it was. Then my grandfather said, 'Let's just extend the invitation to all red-headed girl students.' "

"I thank your grandfather," said the curmudgeon. "It was the first time I ever noticed girls, and I've been doing it ever since." He turned and looked out the window. "The loss of the Washington Irving was a turning point in steamboating on the Hudson. With her speed, with her daytime cabins amidships, each one opening on a private segment of deck space, with her splendid dining saloon abaft on the main deck, she offered something pretty grand in the way of inland travel. The Day Line couldn't really afford to reproduce her, for even then people were seeking out the illusory pleasures of driving up the old Albany Post Road on weekends." He peered intently at something across the river. "I think I see one of your surviving vessels tied up in the Morris Canal. The Chauncey M. Depew, isn't it, back from her later career in Bermuda as a ships' tender?"

"Yes," said Olcott. "She and the Peter Stuyvesant, up in Boston, are propeller-driven, but the only surviving sidewheeler is the Alexander Hamilton."

"And *she's* our cause for today!" the old curmudgeon said to us.

"The Hamilton is the last Hudson River sidewheel steamboat," said Olcott. "We banded together a couple of years ago and formed the Steamer Alexander Hamilton Society, whose purpose is to save her from extinction."

Another guest, who proved to be Dan Donovan, the Alexander Hamilton purser, beamed at Mr. Olcott, and we all sat down to lunch.

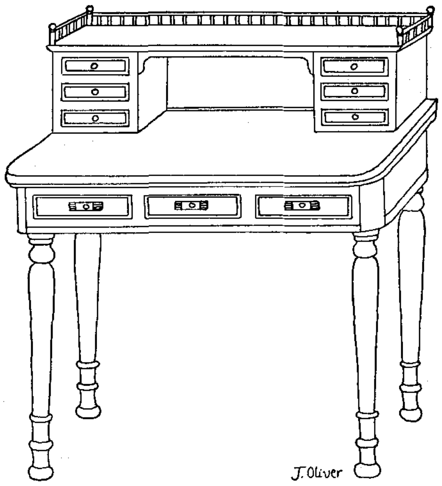
"This is not bad chicken," the o.c. said. "I enjoy going to luncheons where there's plenty of elbowroom for everybody. This is like New York back in 1909."

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Olcott, "the Hamilton is in great danger. She's sitting on a sandbank, with holes in her hull, down at Atlantic Highlands, near Sandy Hook. She continued in service after the family sold the Day Line, but she was retired on Labor Day in 1971, and she's been looking for a home ever since. For a while, she was berthed at the South Street Seaport. Then she was towed across the East River and put into storage at the old Navy Yard, in Brooklyn. Then a group of people who were going to make her into a floating restaurant bought her, but they found the cost of rebuilding her too great to handle. Now, as the salt water gets to work on her innards, her state of health grows a little bit worse every day. If something isn't done in a very short time, she'll be beyond salvation."

"Something *must* be done," said William Ewen. "She represents a hundred and fifty years of Hudson River steamboating, and she's an impressive racing beauty."

"She's a cathedral," said Frank Braynard. "How many thousands of Americans have sent money to preserve Venice or Mont-Saint-Michel! And here we have, right in our midst, another monument that must be saved. I can't think of anything more wonderful we could do than rescue this beautiful white swan of the Hudson. Oddly, as Op Sail proved, it's much easier in this country to preserve splendid old sailing ships than it is to preserve a slightly newer but magnificent old steamboat."

Ann Bedell, an energetic worker on behalf of the Steamer Alexander Hamilton Society, spoke up to say that she had already got one bank, one foundation, and about two hundred and fifty individuals to promise financial support. "But we desperately need seventy-five thousand dollars in the next two months, and a total of three hundred and fifty thousand by mid-July, if we're ever going to float her again," she went on. "The Alexander Hamilton has been officially listed by the State of New Jersey as a historic site, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation has come out in favor of our scheme. Thanks largely to the efforts of Senator Kennedy, the National Trust now has a Maritime Preservation Division, and we've made an application to the people there. And I hope everyone in this room will do his bit."



Professor Jacobs said he couldn't wait for the Hamilton to be afloat again, because he felt that it would make a superb mobile museum.

Over dessert—vanilla ice cream and raspberry sherbet—Mr. Olcott said, "After my family sold the Hudson River Day Line, we went straight off to Maine, because my father, who had a sailboat and a motorboat, said he wanted to live as near as possible to his boats, so he wouldn't have to use an automobile to get to them. My mother, whose name was Ruth, didn't like the idea of sailboats at all and wouldn't go near them. So when it came to the point of naming the sailboat, my father decided to call her Ruthless."

Neighborhood Story

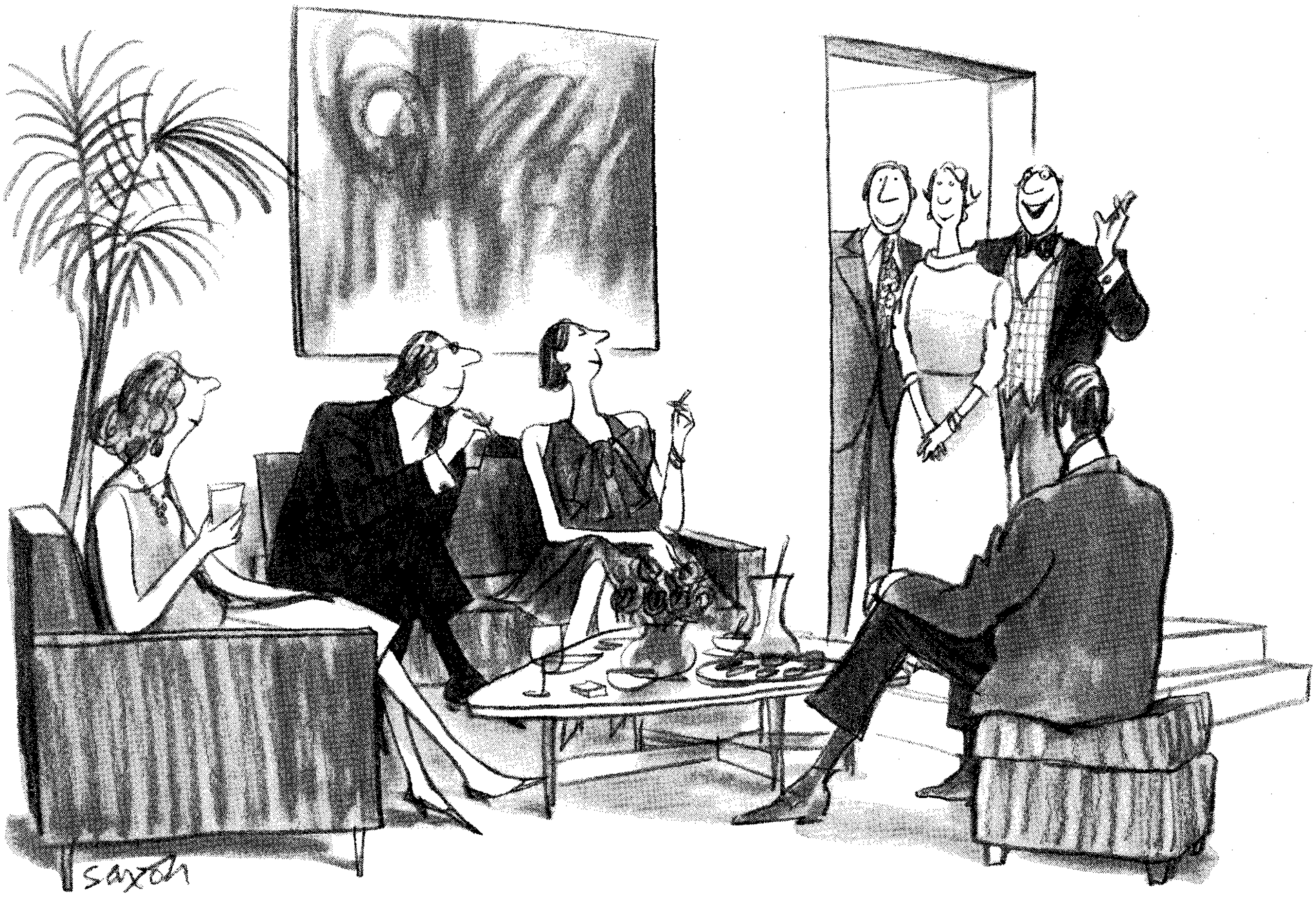
ABOUT three years ago, we first took note of a sign, a plain square of white cardboard with black Magic Marker lettering, posted above and to the right of the doorway at 125 Sullivan Street, in an Italian neighborhood in the Village. It read:

Piano Playing
Not Mine.
B. DeVito

The sign has remained there through rain, snow, and the Feast of St. Anthony, which occupies lower Sullivan Street in June. It is the only handwritten sign posted on the exterior of any building on this street.

Until a year ago, we had no clue to the sign's meaning or its author, although from time to time we heard some ragtime piano, and also some recorded Caruso arias, coming from 125 Sullivan Street. We asked several people in the neighborhood, including two men in hats whose office is the intersection of Prince and Sullivan Streets, and whose responses were "I don't know" and "What do I know? I don't know nothin'." Later, we asked Louis Borre, the neighborhood carpenter. "You don't want to know," he said. Even Frankie Pierre, a regular at Vinnie's Luncheonette, where the free-lance conversationalists drop in for espresso, didn't care to offer much more. "DeVito? That's Bobby DeVito. You know, that's that kid." Having said this much, he shrugged and put the subject aside. A woman sitting at the back end of the counter remarked that she had heard that Bobby DeVito played the piano but that she had not actually heard him play. The matter dropped.

Then, this past summer, we were in Willy DePauli's grocery store, on Sul-



"Would you please welcome Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Garfield!"

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livan Street—a comfortable little shop that has been run since 1913 by the most congenial grocer in New York. As usual, Willy was being subjected to a monologue by a neighborhood resident; this time it was a young man in his late twenties who was talking on the subject of taxicab-company procedures. The young man towered over the counter and had on a loose-fitting tan raincoat, which was buttoned, even though it was July. He wore his hair straight and long, parted low and swept across his forehead, and he had a patchy Vandyke beard, which looked like graffiti. In a tenor voice that had plenty of wind pushing it, he spoke about taxi procedures with unflagging enthusiasm, weaving and bobbing, signalling and directing non-stop.

"But you don't drive a taxi," Willy protested.

"No, I'm trying to get a job with the company—maybe part-time, like one or two days a week," the young man said. He paused, then said, "I'm still waiting for them to fix my piano, you know. It's over a year, Willy, and they still can't get it in tune. Over a year. I need to play, boy. All I do is listen to my Caruso records."

We introduced ourself and found that we were meeting Bobby DeVito. We very quickly learned these things: that the recorded Caruso music we heard occasionally coming from 125 Sullivan Street came from Bobby DeVito's apartment; that the homemade ragtime piano music we heard occasionally did not, and had caused him to write the disclaimer "Piano Playing Not Mine;" that he *was* a pianist; that he had his reputation as a pianist to protect; that he transcribed Caruso arias for the upper registers of the piano; that he had once played in the Princess Ballroom of the Americana; that he had once played at the Kingsbridge Veterans Hospital, in the Bronx, near his sister's house; and that he had played other engagements around the city—at senior citizens' homes, at private clubs, and so on. We learned by looking at Willy DePauli's face that the neighborhood had not decided whether Bobby DeVito could or could not actually play the piano.

"I'll have a concert soon," Bobby DeVito concluded. Then he bowed low and shook our hand with both of his, thanked us several times, and, on leaving, told us that Willy would know as soon as the concert date was set.

After Bobby DeVito had gone, we asked Willy, "Can he play?"

Willy replied, "He says so. I know some people who said they heard he could play. I never heard him. And he doesn't work. Who knows?"

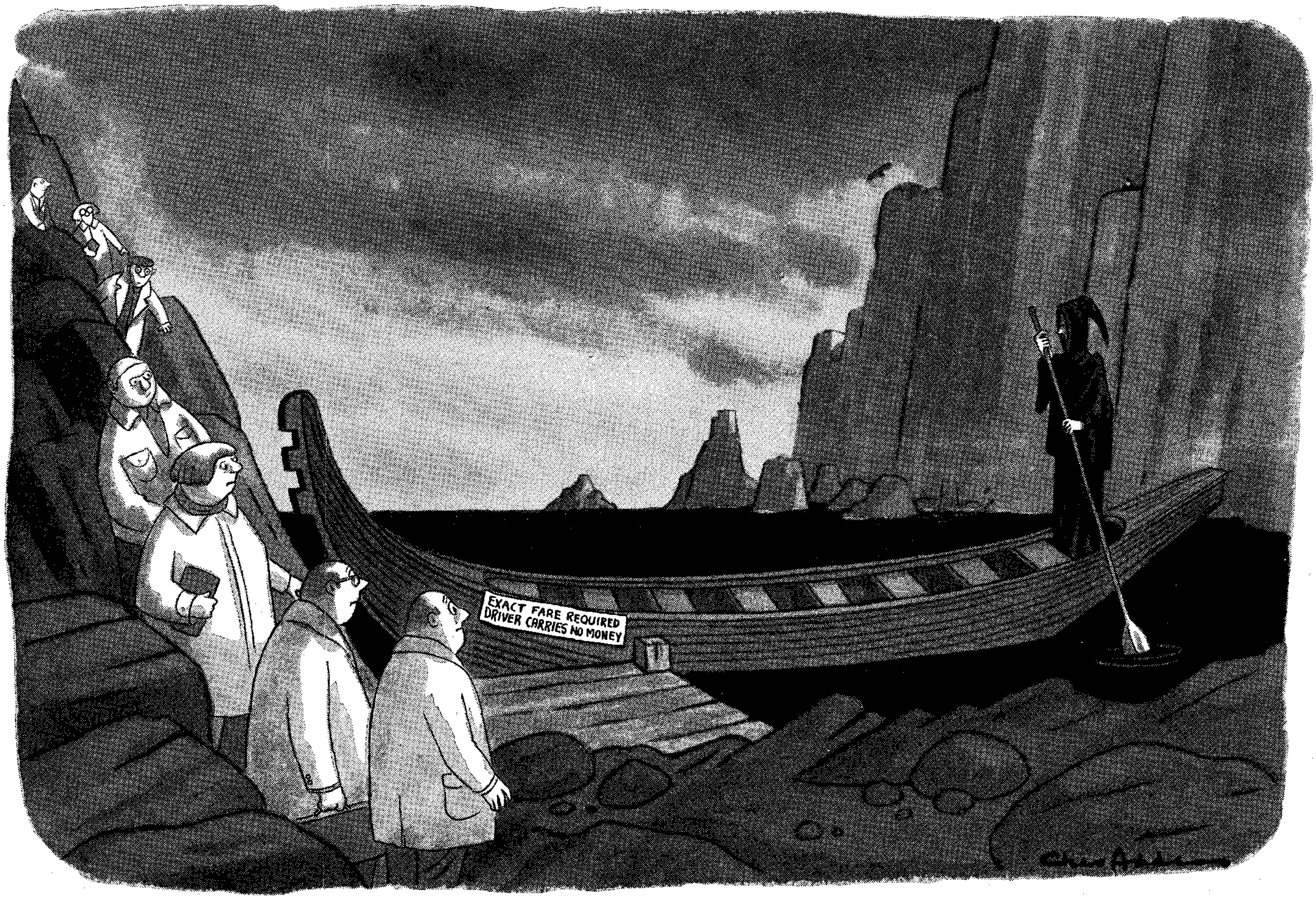
In the next few months, we saw a lot of Bobby DeVito: on the corner of Prince and Sullivan, chatting with almost anyone who stepped onto the walk—mostly girls, who let his best salutations die—or standing for long periods in the doorway of 125 Sullivan Street with his mother, a cheerful-looking woman called Josie, and a hyperactive dog on a tight leash. Every now and then, in the early mornings, he would fly into Vinnie's Luncheonette and holler "I've got a car! Anyone going to the airport? Cheaper than a taxi!" and then storm out. Once he had made our acquaintance, he was not shy about stopping us on the corner.

"When can we hear you play?" we always asked.

"I'm going to be on Joe Franklin," he promised.

Eventually, Louis Borre, the carpenter, told us that in fact DeVito had been on Joe Franklin's television program. "I forgot who told me," he said.

Then, several weeks ago, Bobby DeVito approached us with a photocopied handbill announcing a concert at the Greenwich House Music School. The handbill featured a photograph of



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Bobby at the piano, with the heading "Bobby Laine. Semi-Classical Pianist."

"I felt that Laine added a classy sound, but I kept Bobby because I want it to be informal," Bobby DeVito explained. "This is the first time I'm performing in the neighborhood." The handbill, like his sign, had been made by him. "Do you think I should send one to the *Times*? I don't know. The critics can be brutal. I mean, the idea of playing Caruso on the piano may be offensive to them. I don't know."

During the next week, Bobby DeVito was not seen on the street. The evening of the concert arrived. At about ten past eight, we saw Louis Borre crossing Seventh Avenue. He was wearing a green-and-black checked hunting jacket, work pants, work boots, and a knit cap. "What do you think," he asked us. "You think the kid's for real?" Mr. Borre is a great opera lover and quite a good singer.

A few minutes later, a cream-colored Vega coupé pulled up to the red light, and we recognized the driver as a permanent teen-ager from Sullivan Street known as Joey, who wears a newsboy hat and speaks as if he were announcing headlines. "Hey, whatcha standing on the corner for? They auditioning statues?" he cracked.

We told him about Bobby DeVito's concert.

"DeVito?" Joey said. "Let me tell you a thing about him. He was in a band with my brother when they was kids. The guy is tree-mendous on the piano. Tree-mendous." He waved, rolled up his window, and took off.

The recital room, one flight up in the music school, was three-quarters filled when we walked in. An open guestbook on a table by the front door gave us a partial Who's Who: Uncle Thomas DeVito, from Staten Island; three young DeVito nieces of Bobby's, from the Bronx; Pete and Connie Montefusco, of Mulberry Street; Walter Baldaccini, of Bedford Street; Mike Cigliano, of MacDougal Street; and Fran Weissman, of Ocean Parkway. In the room, we recognized Josie, Bobby's mother, with a dazzling golden hairdo; Chuck and Marie from Chu-Mar Imports, on Prince Street; and, in the back, by the radiator, Louis Borre, the carpenter. We took a seat at the rear of the room, across from Mr. Borre and behind a beefy couple who rested the programs on their chests like lobster bibs.

Bobby DeVito, or Laine, walked in, and stood and addressed his audience before sitting down to play. He wore a cerulean-blue pin-striped double-breasted blazer, with navy pants, a blue dress shirt, and a slightly oversized formal bow tie. "I thought I was the first one to transcribe non-piano compositions," he said. "But I was talking to a fine teacher here, Miss Ida Hartman, and she told me that Franz Liszt transcribed all the Beethoven Symphonies. The piece I will now play was transcribed by that great pianist of yesteryear Franz Liszt." And, with a lurch of the piano bench, he sat down, and proceeded through his program—Beethoven, Sibelius, Tchaikovsky, Puccini, an Italian folk ballad, "Vieni Sul Mar," and a couple of Caruso transcriptions, with a wonderful command of the material. Between numbers, he offered commentary, and was authoritative enough to keep his three young nieces, all wearing charm bracelets, still for most of the way, but Mr. Borre seemed a little remote during Bobby DeVito's anecdotes about "Caruso and his friend Chaliapin, the bass" and "Sibelius and his hunting knife." Mr. Borre seemed to absorb much of the music with his eyes closed.

The members of Bobby DeVito's family, looking triumphant, joined him to form a handshaking line at the door.

"You gotta have respect for the kid," Mr. Borre said as he zipped up his jacket.

ON THE STEPS OF THE CONSERVATORY

C'MON Hilda don't fret.

—Well Maggie it's a blow.

—Don't let it bother you, don't let it get you down.

—Once I thought they were going to admit me to the Conservatory but now I know they will never admit me to the Conservatory.

—Yes they are very particular about who they admit to the Conservatory. They will never admit you to the Conservatory.

—They will never admit me to the Conservatory, I know that now.

—You are not Conservatory material I'm afraid. That's the plain truth of it.

—You're not important, they told me, just remember that, you're not important, what's so important about you? What?

—C'mon Hilda don't fret.

—Well Maggie it's a blow.

—When are you going to change yourself, change yourself into a loaf and a fish?

—Christian imagery is taught at the Conservatory, also Islamic imagery and the imagery of Public Safety.

—Red, yellow, and green circles.

—When they told me I got between the poles of my rickshaw and trotted heavily away.

—The great black ironwork doors of the Conservatory barred to you forever.

—Trotted heavily away in the direction of my house. My small, poor house.

—C'mon Hilda don't fret.

—Yes, I am still trying to get into the Conservatory, although my chances are probably worse than ever.

—They don't want pregnant women in the Conservatory.

—I didn't tell them, I lied about it.

—Didn't they ask you?

—No they forgot to ask me and I didn't tell them.

—Well then it's hardly on that account that—

—I felt they knew.

—The Conservatory is hostile to the new spirit, the new spirit is not liked there.

—Well Maggie it's a blow nevertheless. I had to go back to my house.

—Where although you entertain the foremost artists and intellectuals of your time you grow progressively more despondent and depressed.

—Yes he was a frightful lawyer.

—Lover?

—That too, frightful. He said he could not get me into the Conservatory because of my unimportance.

—Was there a fee?

—There's always a fee. Pounds and pounds.

—I stood on the terrace at the rear of the Conservatory and studied the flagstones reddened with the lifebloods of generations of Conservatory students. Standing there I reflected: Hilda will never be admitted to the Conservatory.

—I read the Conservatory Circular and my name was not among those listed.

—Well I suppose it was in part your espousal of the new spirit that counted against you.

—I will never abjure the new spirit.

—And you're a veteran too, I should have thought that would have weighed in your favor.

—Well Maggie it's a disappointment, I must admit that frankly.

—C'mon Hilda don't weep and tear your hair here where they can see you.

—Are they looking out of the windows?

—Probably they're looking out of the windows.

—It's said that they import a cook, on feast days.

—They have naked models too.

—Do you really think so? I'm not surprised.

—The best students get their dinners sent up on trays.

—Do you really think so? I'm not surprised.

—Grain salads and large portions of choice meats.

—Oh it hurts, it hurts, it hurts.

—Bread with drippings, and on feast days cake.

—I'm as gifted as they are, I'm as gifted as some of them.

—Decisions made by a committee of ghosts. They drop black beans or white beans into a pot.

—Once I thought I was to be admitted. There were encouraging letters.

—You're not Conservatory material I'm afraid. Only the best material is Conservatory material.

—I'm as good as some of those who rest now in the soft Conservatory beds.

—Merit is always considered closely.

—I could smile back at the smiling faces of the swift, dangerous teachers.

—Yes, we have naked models. No, the naked models are not emotionally meaningful to us.

—I could work with clay or paste things together.

—Yes, sometimes we paste things on the naked models—clothes, mostly. Yes, sometimes we play our Conservatory violins, cellos, trumpets for the naked models, or sing to them, or correct their speech, as our deft fingers fly over the sketch pads. . . .

—I could I suppose fill out another application, or several.

—Yes, you have considerable of a belly on you now. I remember when it was flat, flat as a book.

—I will die if I don't get into the Conservatory, die.

—Naw you won't you're just saying that.

—I will completely croak if I don't get into the Conservatory, I promise you.

—Things are not so bad, you can always do something else, I don't know what, c'mon Hilda be reasonable.

—My whole life depends on it.

—Oh God I remember when it was flat. Didn't we tear things up, though? I remember running around that town, and hiding in dark places, that was a great town and I'm sorry we left it.

—Now we are grown, grown and proper.

—Well, I misled you. The naked models are emotionally meaningful to us.

—They are?

—We love them and sleep with them all the time—before breakfast, after breakfast, during breakfast.

—Why that's all right!

—Why that's rather neat!

—I like that!

—That's not so bad!

—I wish you hadn't told me that.

—C'mon Hilda don't be so single-minded, there are lots of other things you can do if you want.

—I guess they operate on some kind of principle of exclusivity. Keeping some people out while letting other people in.

—We got a Coushatta Indian in there, real full-blooded Coushatta Indian.

—In there?

—Yes. He does hanging walls out of scraps of fabric and twigs, very beautiful, and he does sand paintings and plays on whistles of various kinds, sometimes he chants, and he bangs on a drum, works in silver, and he's also a weaver, and he translates things from

Coushatta into English and from English into Coushatta and he's also a crack shot and can bulldog steers and catch catfish on trotlines and ride bareback and make medicine out of common ingredients, aspirin mostly, and he sings and he's also an actor. He's very talented.

—My whole life depends on it.

—Listen Hilda maybe you could be an Associate. We have this deal whereby you pay twelve bucks a year and that makes you an Associate. You get the Circular and have all the privileges of an Associate.

—What are they?

—You get the Circular.

—That's all?

—Well I guess you're right.

—I'm just going to sit here I'm not going to go away.

—Your distress is poignant to me.

—I'll have the baby right here right on these steps.

—Well maybe there'll be good news one of these days.

—I feel like a dead person sitting in a chair.

—You're still pretty and attractive.

—That's good to hear I'm pleased you think that.

—And warm you're warm you're very warm.

—Yes I have a warm nature very warm.

—Weren't you in the Peace Corps also years ago?

—I was and drove ambulances too down in Nicaragua.

—The Conservatory life is just as halcyon as you imagine it—precisely so.

—I guess I'll just have to go back to my house and clean up, take out the papers and the trash.

—I guess that kid'll be born one of these days, right?

—Continue working on my études no matter what they say.

—That's admirable I think.

—The thing is not to let your spirit be conquered.

—I guess that kid'll be born after a while, right?

—I guess so. Those boogers are really gonna keep me out of there, you know that?

—Their minds are inflexible and rigid.

—Probably because I'm a poor pregnant woman don't you think?

—You said you didn't tell them.

—But maybe they're very shrewd psychologists and they could just look at my face and tell.

—No it doesn't show yet how many months are you?

—Two and a half just about you can tell when I take my clothes off.

—You didn't take your clothes off did you?

—No I was wearing you know what the students wear. Jeans and a sarape. I carried a green book bag.

—Jam-packed with études.

—Yes. He asked where I had gotten my previous training and I told him.

—Oh boy I remember when it was flat, flat as the deck of something, a boat or a ship.

—You're not important, they told me.

—Oh sweetie I am so sorry for you.

—We parted then I walking through the gorgeous Conservatory light into the foyer and then through the great black ironwork Conservatory doors.

—I was a face on the other side of the glass.

—My aspect as I departed most dignified and serene.

—Time heals everything.

—No it doesn't.

—Cut lip fat lip puffed lip split lip.

—Haw! haw! haw! haw!

COLLECTIVE DAWNS

You can have whatever you want.
Own it, I mean. In the sense
Of twisting it to you through long, spiralling afternoons.
It has a sense beyond that meaning that was dropped there
And left to rot. The glacier seems

Impervious but is all shot through
With amethyst and the loud, distraught notes of the cuckoo.
They say the town is coming apart.
And people go around with a fragment of a smile
Missing from their faces. Life is getting cheaper

In some senses. Over the tops of old hills
The sunset jabs down, angled in a way it couldn't have
Been before. The bird-sellers walk back into it.
"We needn't fire their kilns; tonight is the epic
Night of the world. Grettir is coming back to us.
His severed hand has grabbed the short sword
And jumped back onto his wrist. The whole man is waking up.
The island is becoming a sun. Wait by this
Mistletoe bush and you will get the feeling of really
Being out of the world and with it. The sun
Is now an inlet of freshness whose very nature
Causes it to dry up." The old poems
In the book have changed value once again. Their black-letter
Fools only themselves into ignoring their stiff, formal qualities, and
  they move
Insatiably out of reach of bathos and the bad line
Into a weird ether of forgotten dismemberments. Was it
This rosebud? Who said that?

The time of all forgotten
Things is at hand. Therefore I wrote you
This bread and butter letter, you my friend
Who saved me from the mill pond of chill doubt
As to my own viability, and from the proud village
Of bourgeois comfort and despair, the mirrored spectacles of grief.
Let who can take courage from the dawn's
Coming up with the same idiot solution under another guise
So that all meanings should be scrambled this way
No matter how important they were to the men
Coming in the future, since this is the way it has to happen
For all things under the shrinking light to change
And the pattern to follow them, unheeded, bargained for
As it too is absorbed. But the guesswork
Has been taken out of millions of nights. The gasworks
Know it and fall to the ground, though no doom
Says it through the long cool hours of rest
While it sleeps as it can, as in fact it must, for the man to find himself.

—John Ashbery

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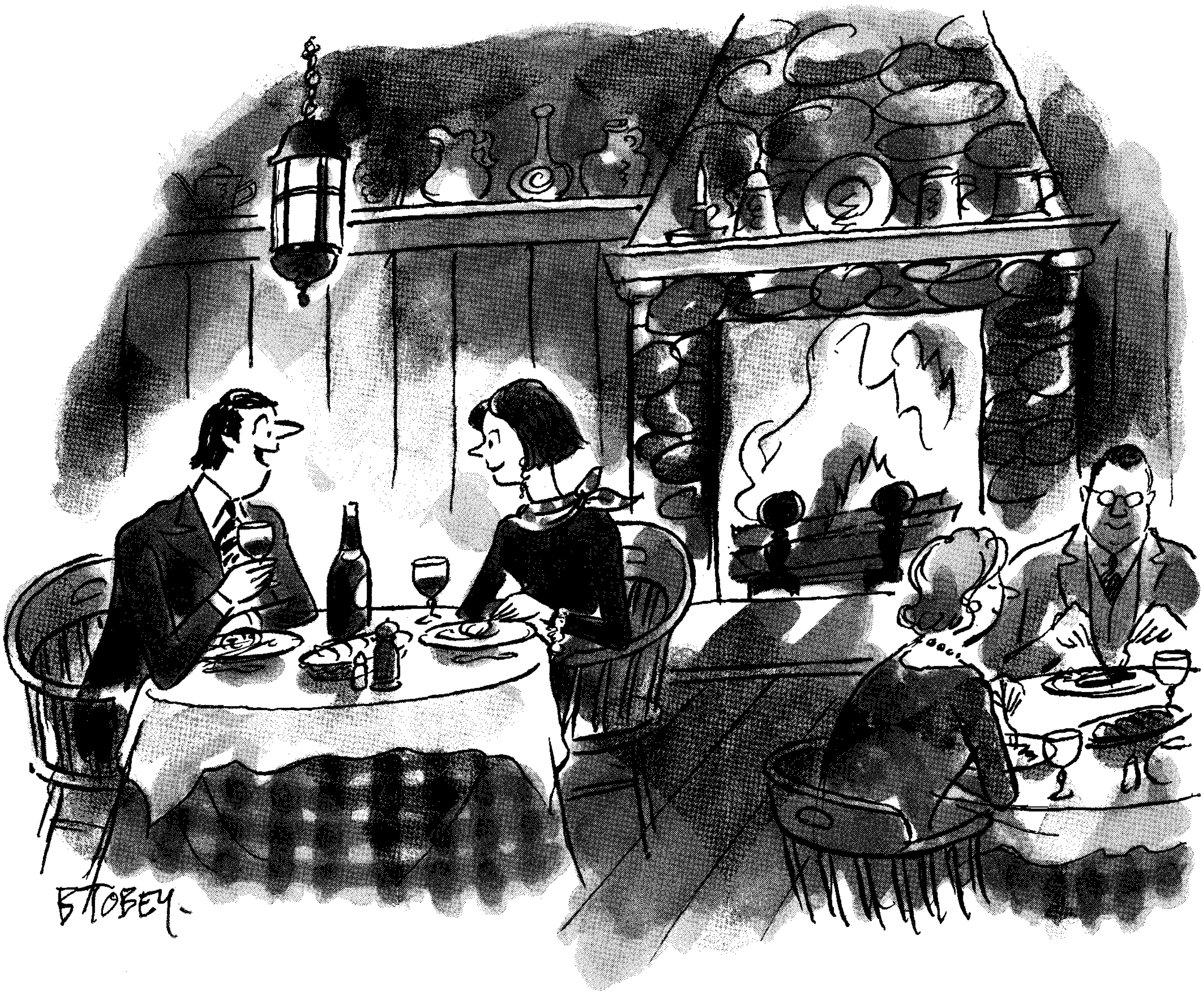


"The ambience is great! The blazing fire is great! The service is great! The food is great! The wine is great! You're great! I'm great!"

• •

—Well Hilda there are other things in life.

—Yes Maggie I suppose there are. None that I want.

—Non-Conservatory people have their own lives. We Conservatory people don't have much to do with them but we are told they have their own lives.

—I suppose I could file an appeal if there's anywhere to file an appeal to. If there's anywhere.

—That's an idea we get stacks of appeals, stacks and stacks.

—I can wait all night. Here on the steps.

—I'll sit with you. I'll help you formulate the words.

—Are they looking out of the windows?

—Yes I think so. What do you want to say?

—I want to say my whole life depends on it. Something like that.

—It's against the rules for Conservatory people to help non-Conservatory people you know that.

—Well Goddammit I thought you were going to help me.

—O.K. I'll help you. What do you want to say?

—I want to say my whole life depends on it. Something like that.

—We got man naked models and woman naked models, harps, giant potted plants, and drapes. There are hierarchies, some people higher up and others lower down. These mingle, in the gorgeous light. We have lots of fun. There's lots of green furniture you know with paint on it. Worn green paint. Gilt lines one-quarter inch from the edges. Worn gilt lines.

—And probably flambeaux in little niches in the walls, right?

—Yeah we got flambeaux. Who's the father?

—Guy named Robert.

—Did you have a good time?

—The affair ran the usual course. Fever, boredom, trapped.

—Hot, rinse, spin dry.

—Is it wonderful in there Maggie?

—I have to say it is. Yes. It is.

—Do you feel great, being there? Do you feel wonderful?

—Yes, it feels pretty good. Very often there is, upon the tray, a rose.

—I will never be admitted to the Conservatory.

—You will never be admitted to the Conservatory.

—How do I look?

—O.K. Not bad. Fine.

—I will never get there. How do I look?

—Fine. Great. Time heals everything Hilda.

—No it doesn't.

—Time heals everything.

—No it doesn't. How do I look?

—Old.

—DONALD BARTHELME

NEW HAMPSHIRE BURIED UNDER PERMACURSE

THIS has been the hardest winter in memory, and up here in New London, N.H. (pop. 2,300), I have spent a good part of it thinking about all my friends back in the city and the suburbs who have expressed the wish to move up here and live in the real country. Friends, have you been thinking about me? Do you wonder how we survived here when our house lay under four feet of snow (a lie) and the rock maples creaked in temperatures that reached twenty below (another lie)? Say yes, because I'm about to tell you.

Wear socks to bed. Keep on good terms with pets. (The three-dog night—as in "one dog in bed for cold weather, two dogs for very cold weather," etc.—is no joke. In a large New Hampshire family there is much calling of dogs and cats from room to room at bedtime.) Send Christmas whiskey to the plumber. Propitiate the car repairman. Drink. When warm, gloat. When cold, boast.

Once, this family lived on the Canadian border of Vermont, on the shore of a frozen lake. Friends, it was really cold there. One night three cars fossilized. It was thirty-two below. It was thirty-six below. It was forty-one below. These figures are offered now by several family members, one of whom was only two at the time. Falsehood blooms in three-dog weather; satisfying lies are told about snow depth, wind velocity, and the performance of wood stoves, but most particularly about temperature. That winter, we drained the motor oil, stiff as the blood of frozen mammoths, from our three cars, heated it on the kitchen stove in the pot-roast pot, and poured it back into the cars. One of them started. We drove uptown. "Forty-four below at our place last night," said the first soul we met. It is colder in the valleys, because cold air sinks. It is colder on high ground, because the wind howls.

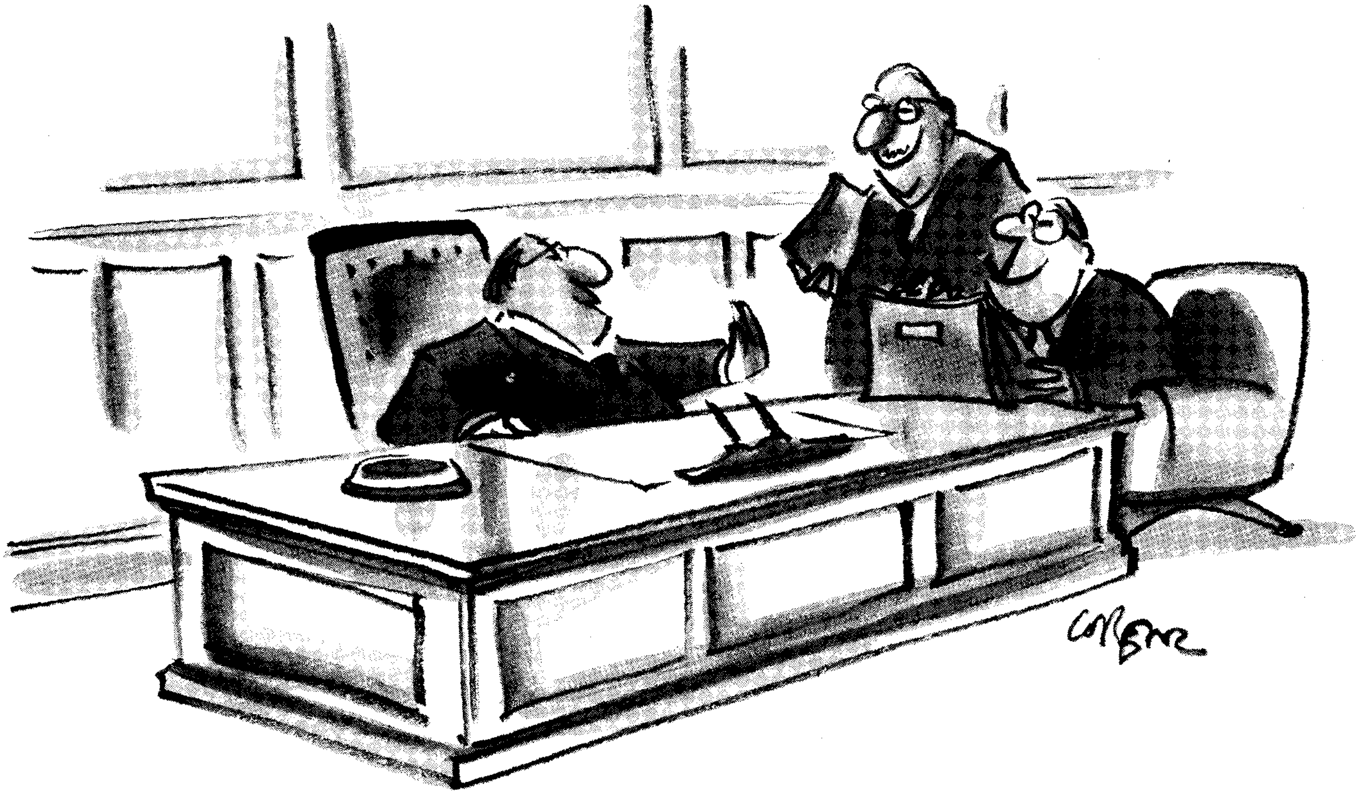
On nippy mornings this winter, the children tunnel out of bed fully clothed, and add layers. Coals are raked forward in the upstairs and downstairs wood stoves, splits of dried rock maple are thrown in, dampers are opened, and the stoves roar. In fifteen minutes, the heat blasted outward by these loyal friends will be detectable at distances of nearly twelve inches. Shrieks are heard from the upstairs bathroom. The hot-water tap, a quisling remembered from other winters, has frozen. It will have to be encouraged with a propane torch, but it will freeze again on the next clear night, and it will spend the winter buried in permacurse. Talk is heard of moving back to the city.

The permacurse layer is thick in central New Hampshire, where the family now huddles. Most of it is caused by machines that won't start. Water pipes, septic systems, clothes washers, chain saws, snowblowers, and cars that have no personality in August turn balky and pusillanimous in January or, contrariwise, reveal themselves as sturdy and valorous comrades. The family's ten-year-old Plymouth convertible, a heap whose battery cables writhe upward from a yellowish mass of foaming corrosion, grunts once on squeaky-cold mornings, then starts. The family's practically new 1974 Desposo station wagon groans and crepitates but will not run, despite new plugs, points, and starter.

There are ten ways, in addition to boiling oil, to start a mutinous auto: (1) push it, (2) pull it, (3) plug in engine-block heater the night before, (4) use hair dryer, (5) use electric space heater, (6) remove battery the night before and sleep with it under your pillow, (7) spray starting fluid into carburetor, (8) mix a product called Drygas with fuel before the gas line freezes, (9) build heated garage the summer before, (10) call service truck. The Desposo knows eleven ways not to start. It is loathed, not only by the family but by the local garagemen.

The head garageman is a tall, sunny-natured young man who, four days into a good freeze-up, looks like Max von Sydow toward the end of an Ingmar Bergman film. His cheeks are sunken. He stands ankle-deep in existential despair, administering absolution and justice: this repair will be done, but that one can wait. During the Hunger Moon, this youth is the unquestioned village chief. It is easy

"I love your pants. Were they yours originally?"



"Please don't thank me. I would have accepted a kickback from anyone."

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to imagine him saying to haggard tribesmen, ourselves, "Everyone form a circle and walk toward the center, beating sticks. Tonight we eat porcupine."

For three years now, the family has heated its house entirely with wood cut on the property (a lie; electric heaters in the bathrooms are a sinful luxury). Electric heat was built into the house at a time when using it was no more wasteful than burning piles of five-dollar bills to keep warm. Now the denomination of the bills that would have to be burned has risen to twenties, and the family woodcutter calculates that for about two weeks of labor in the summer he saves at least eighteen hundred dollars in fuel bills (a lie). He burns ten cords of wood a year in three stoves; a fourth stove, in the sauna, is fuelled by kiln-dried birch bits from the local crutch factory. The stoves and their pipes cost about a thousand dollars. The woodcutting tools—two chain saws, a splitting maul, a go-devil, two lopping axes, several wedges, and a peavey—cost about six hundred. The woodcutter is dickering for a four-wheel-drive pickup truck with a winch and a plow, a rig whose purpose is to confer respect. One of these costs about seventy-five hundred dollars new and, counting repairs, about twice that much used.

Boy-power for wood stacking costs more in scorn received than it is worth. The family's twelve-year-old son thinks his father is a turkey for not turning on the thermostat, and thus neglecting his duties as a responsible consumer. The boy misses the point of wood burning, which is to be able to stand around the filling station, waiting for the Desposo to roll out of the intensive-care unit, and exchange stove lore, such as "Yellow birch is sooty when it's wet," and "If you have to burn wet wood, use yellow birch."

NOT much else is happening here, but the family expects house guests next week, and if they get here before the glacier does there will be some fun. Guests are always welcome, because they arrive with gift booze and hearts open to New Hampshire's beauty. "There's ice on the inside of the bedroom window," one of them will marvel. "Aye-yup," says the householder, much pleased. "Always is, when it's warm like this."

Last month, some guests carried home with them stories of a winter phenomenon as rarely observed as the mating of moose. During five straight weeks of intense cold, the family cat had declined to be caught and put outside, and it had used a box of income-tax records as a latrine. The box had been discovered and dumped. One morning, as family and guests were eating whiskey pancakes and fatback, to allow for the windchill factor, the cat was observed squatting in a window box full of lettuce sprouts which the householder had planted indoors, in order to have fresh salad. The householder grabbed the cat, opened the door, and threw the cat thirty-two feet into a snowdrift. Then he threw the window box almost as far.

The performance drew mixed reviews.

"A New Hampshire record, but you fouled," said one of the guests, pointing to the householder's feet, which were on the doorsill.

"Wow, a cataclysm!" said the family's youngest child, an implacable rookie punster.

"The pastoral dream strikes again," said the householder's wife. "Who wants more fatback?" —JOHN SKOW

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There's a refreshing note this evening on CBS's popular magazine show, "Sixty Minutes," (WTOP-9 at 7) for those who feel that TV reacts too much to crisis situations and rarely backgrounds potential problems. Dan Rather visits the Azores, the crossroads of the Pacific and a vital part of American defense strategy.—*Bernie Harrison in the Washington Star.*

Come back, Rather! Forget about strategy!

SHIFTING

THE woman's name was Natalie, and the man's name was Larry. They had been childhood sweethearts; he had first kissed her at an ice-skating party, when they were ten. She had been unlacing her skates and had not expected the kiss. He had not expected to do it, either—he had some notion of getting his face out of the wind that was blowing across the iced-over lake, and he found himself ducking his head toward her. Kissing her seemed the natural thing to do. When they graduated from high school he was named "class clown" in the yearbook, but Natalie didn't think of him as being particularly funny. He spent more time than she thought he needed to studying chemistry, and he never laughed when she joked. She really did not think of him as funny. They went to the same college, in their home town, but he left after a year to go to a larger, more impressive university. She took the train to be with him on weekends, or he took the train to see her. When he graduated, his parents gave him a car. If they had given it to him when he was still in college it would have made things much easier. They waited to give it to him until graduation day, forcing him into attending the graduation exercises. He thought his parents were wonderful people, and Natalie liked them in a way, too, but she resented their perfect timing, their careful smiles. They were afraid that he would marry her. Eventually, he did. He had gone on to graduate school after college, and he set a date six months ahead for their marriage, so that it would take place after his first-semester final exams. That way, he could devote his time to studying for the chemistry exams.

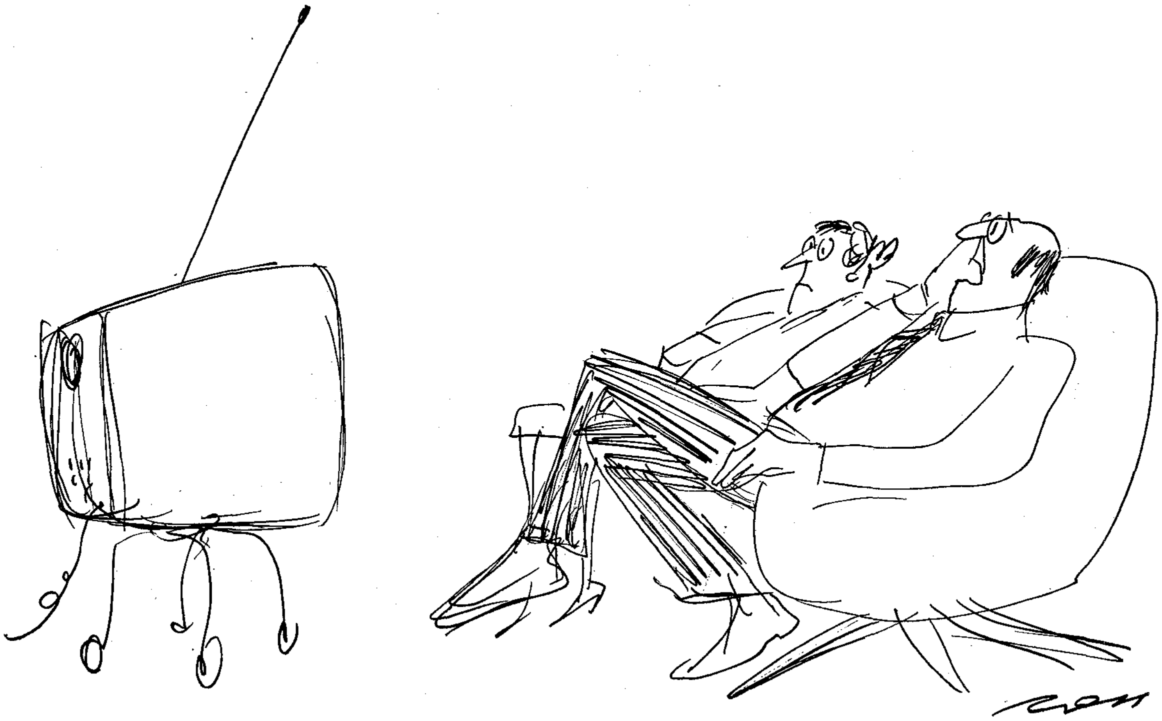
When she married him, he had had the car for eight months. It still smelled like a brand-new car. There was never any clutter in the car. Even the ice scraper was kept in the glove compartment. There was not even a sweater or a lost glove in the back seat. He vacuumed the car every weekend, after washing it at the car wash. On Friday nights, on their way to some cheap restaurant and a dollar movie, he would stop at the car wash, and she would get out, so he could vacuum all over the inside of the car. She would lean against the metal wall of the car wash and watch him clean it.

It was expected that she would not become pregnant. She did not. It had also been expected that she would keep their apartment clean, and keep out of the way as much as possible in such close quarters while he was studying. The apartment was messy, though, and when he was studying late at night she would interrupt him and try to talk him into going to sleep. He gave a chemistry-class lecture once a week, and she would often tell him that over-preparing was as bad as under-preparing. She did not know if she believed this, but it was a favorite line of hers. Sometimes he listened to her.

On Tuesdays, when he gave the lecture, she would drop him off at school and then drive to a supermarket to do the week's shopping. Usually she did not make a list before she went shopping, but when she got to the parking lot she would take a tablet out of her purse and write a few items on it, sitting in the car in the cold. Even having a few things written down would stop her from wandering aimlessly in the store and buying things that she would never use. Before this, she had bought several pans and cans of food that she had not used, or that she could have done without. She felt better when she had a list.

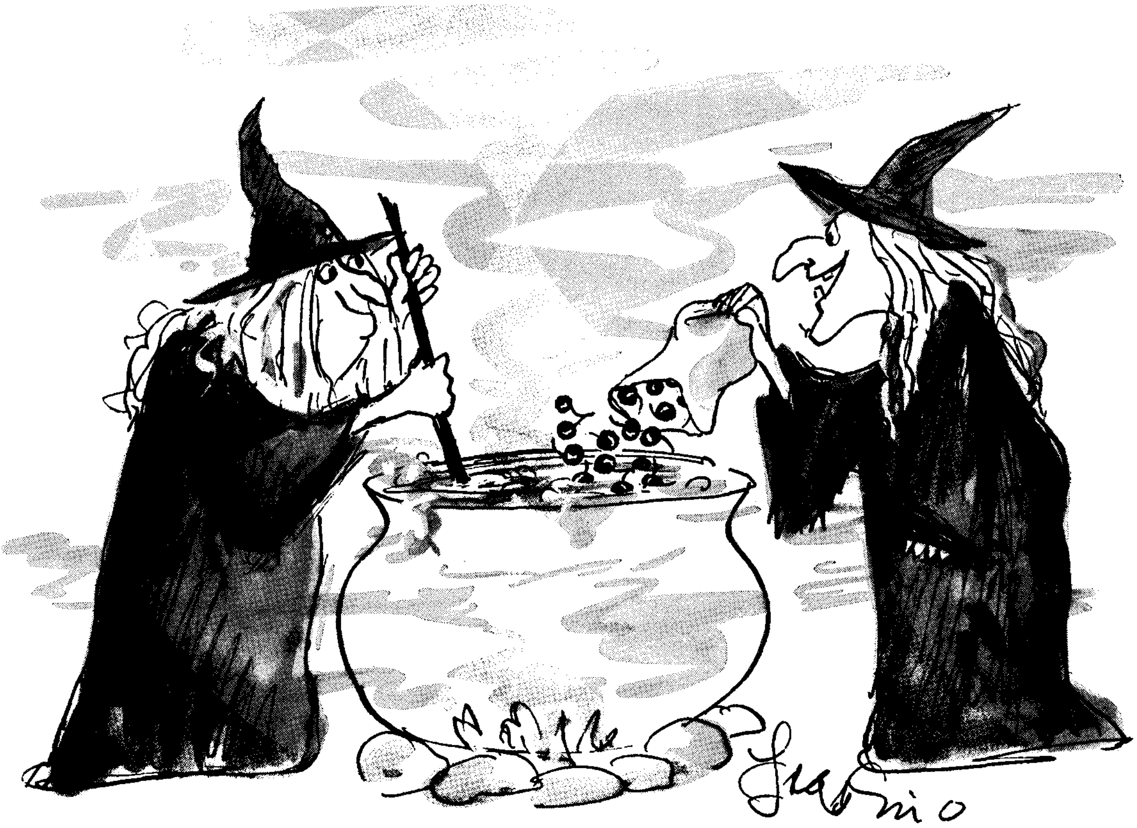
She would drop him at school again on Wednesdays, when he had two seminars that together took up all the afternoon. Sometimes she would drive out of town then, to the suburbs, and shop there if any shopping needed to be done. Otherwise, she would go to the art museum, which was not far away but was hard to get to by bus. There was one piece of sculpture in there that she wanted very much to touch, but the guard was always nearby. She came so often that in time the guard began to nod hello. She wondered if she could ever persuade the man to turn his head for a few seconds—only that long—so she could stroke the sculpture. Of course she would never dare ask. After wandering through the museum and looking at least twice at the sculpture, she would go to the gift shop and buy a few postcards and then sit on one of the museum benches, padded with black vinyl, with a Calder mobile hanging overhead, and write notes to friends. (She never wrote letters.) She would tuck the postcards in her purse and mail them when she left the museum. But before she left, she often had coffee in the restaurant: she saw mothers and children struggling there, and women dressed in fancy clothes talking with their faces close together, as quietly as lovers.

On Thursdays he took the car. After his class, he would drive to visit his parents and his friend Andy, who



"Oh, my God! Is it H & R Block time already?"

had been wounded in Vietnam. About once a month she would go with him, but she had to feel up to it. Being with Andy embarrassed her. She had told him not to go to Vietnam—told him that he could prove his patriotism in some other way—and finally, after she and Larry had made a visit together and she had seen Andy in the motorized bed in his parents' house, Larry had agreed that she need not go again. Andy had apologized to her. It embarrassed her that this man, who had been blown sky-high by a land mine and had lost a leg and lost the full use of his arms, would smile up at her ironically and say, "You were right." She also felt as though he wanted to hear what she would say now, and that now he would listen. Now she had nothing to say. Andy would pull himself up, relying on his right arm, which was the stronger, gripping the rails at the side of the bed, and sometimes he would take her hand. His arms were still weak, but the doctors said he would regain complete use of his right arm with time. She had to make an effort not to squeeze his hand when he held hers, because she found herself wanting to squeeze energy back into him. She had a morbid curiosity about what it felt like to be blown from the ground—to go up, and to come crashing down. During their visit, Larry put on the class-clown act for Andy, telling funny stories and laughing uproariously.



"Call me sentimental, but I always add a few cherries on Washington's Birthday."

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Once or twice, Larry had talked Andy into getting in his wheelchair and had loaded him into the car and taken him to a bar. Larry called her once, late, pretty drunk, to say that he would not be home that night—that he would sleep at his parents' house. "My God," she said. "Are you going to drive Andy home when you're drunk?" "What the hell else can happen to him?" he said.

Larry's parents blamed her for Larry's not being happy. His mother could only be pleasant with her for a short while, and then she would veil her criticisms by putting them as questions. "I know that one thing that helps enormously is good nutrition," his mother said. "He works so hard that he probably needs quite a few vitamins as well, don't you think?" Larry's father was the sort of man who found hobbies in order to avoid his wife. His hobbies were building model boats, repairing clocks, and photography. He took pictures of himself building the boats and fixing the clocks, and gave the pictures, in cardboard frames, to Natalie and Larry for Christmas and birthday presents. Larry's mother was very anxious to stay on close terms with her son, and she knew that Natalie did not like her very much. Once she had visited them during the week, and Natalie, not knowing what to do with her, had taken her to the museum. She had pointed out the sculpture, and his mother had glanced at it and then ignored it. Natalie hated her for her bad taste. She had bad taste in the sweaters she gave Larry, too, but he wore them. They made him look collegiate. That whole world made her sick.

When Natalie's uncle died and left her his 1965 Volvo, they immediately decided to sell it and use the money for a vacation. They put an ad in the paper, and there were several callers. There were some calls on Tuesday, when Larry was in class, and Natalie found herself putting the people off. She told one woman that the car had too much mileage on it, and mentioned body rust, which it did not have; she told another caller, who was very persistent, that the car was already sold. When Larry returned from school, she explained that the phone was off the hook because so many people were calling about the car and she had decided not to sell it after all. They could take a little money from their savings account and go on the trip, if he wanted. But she did not want to sell the car. "It's not an automatic shift," he said. "You don't know how to drive it." She told him that she could learn. "It will cost money to insure it," he said, "and it's old and probably not even dependable." She wanted to keep the car. "I know," he said, "but it doesn't make sense. When we have more money, you can have a car. You can have a newer, better car."

The next day, she went out to the car, which was parked in the driveway of an old lady next door. Her name was Mrs. Larsen and she no longer drove a car, and she told Natalie she could park their second car there. Natalie opened the car door and got behind the wheel and put her hands on it. The wheel was covered with a flaky yellow-and-black plastic cover. She eased it off. A few pieces of foam rubber stuck to the wheel. She picked them off. Underneath the cover, the wheel was a dull red. She ran her fingers around and around the circle of the wheel. Her cousin Burt had delivered the car—a young opportunist, sixteen years old, who said he would drive it the hundred miles from his house to theirs for twenty dollars and a bus ticket home. She had not even invited him to stay for dinner, and Larry had driven him to the bus station. She wondered if it was Burt's cigarette in the ashtray or her dead uncle's. She could not even remember if her uncle smoked. She was surprised that he had left her his car. The car was much more comfortable than Larry's, and it had a nice smell inside. It smelled a little the way a field smells after a spring rain. She rubbed the side of her head back and forth against the window and then got out of the car and went in to see Mrs. Larsen. The night before, she had suddenly thought of the boy who brought the old lady the evening newspaper every night; he looked old enough to drive, and he would probably know how to shift. Mrs. Larsen agreed with her—she was sure that he could teach her. "Of course, everything has its price," the old lady said.

"I know that. I meant to offer him money," Natalie said, and was surprised, listening to her voice, that she sounded old too.

HOUSES

It is hard to go back to women

There are brown leaves on the road
The trees are bare

It is a raw December morning

We seem to have just risen
Wetness hangs in the air

Patches of dormant hyacinth
Or ruined forsythia
Look petrified and meek
An old boulder covered with lichen
Like grass peeling in the distance

It is hard to go back to women

In the wildness that survives
The cold   the pews
Of the still lush dark rhododendron
Extend against the terrace
Past white gravel to a field

The sky low the clouds immense

It is hard to go back to women

We sit and watch the nuthatch
The small one with the red cap
Its beak golden in the feeder

Others are trembling among
The empty geranium pots
The dangling roots
Like frozen moss
Caught in the compact earth

It is hard to go back to women

You sort the names I've lost
The letters I'll never open

There are soft dresses in a closet
And footfalls on a stair

It is a raw December evening

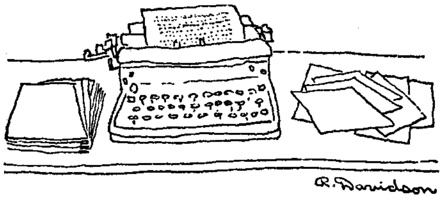
Soon we'll set out
The leaves gone the rooms dust

—ROBERT MAZZOCCO

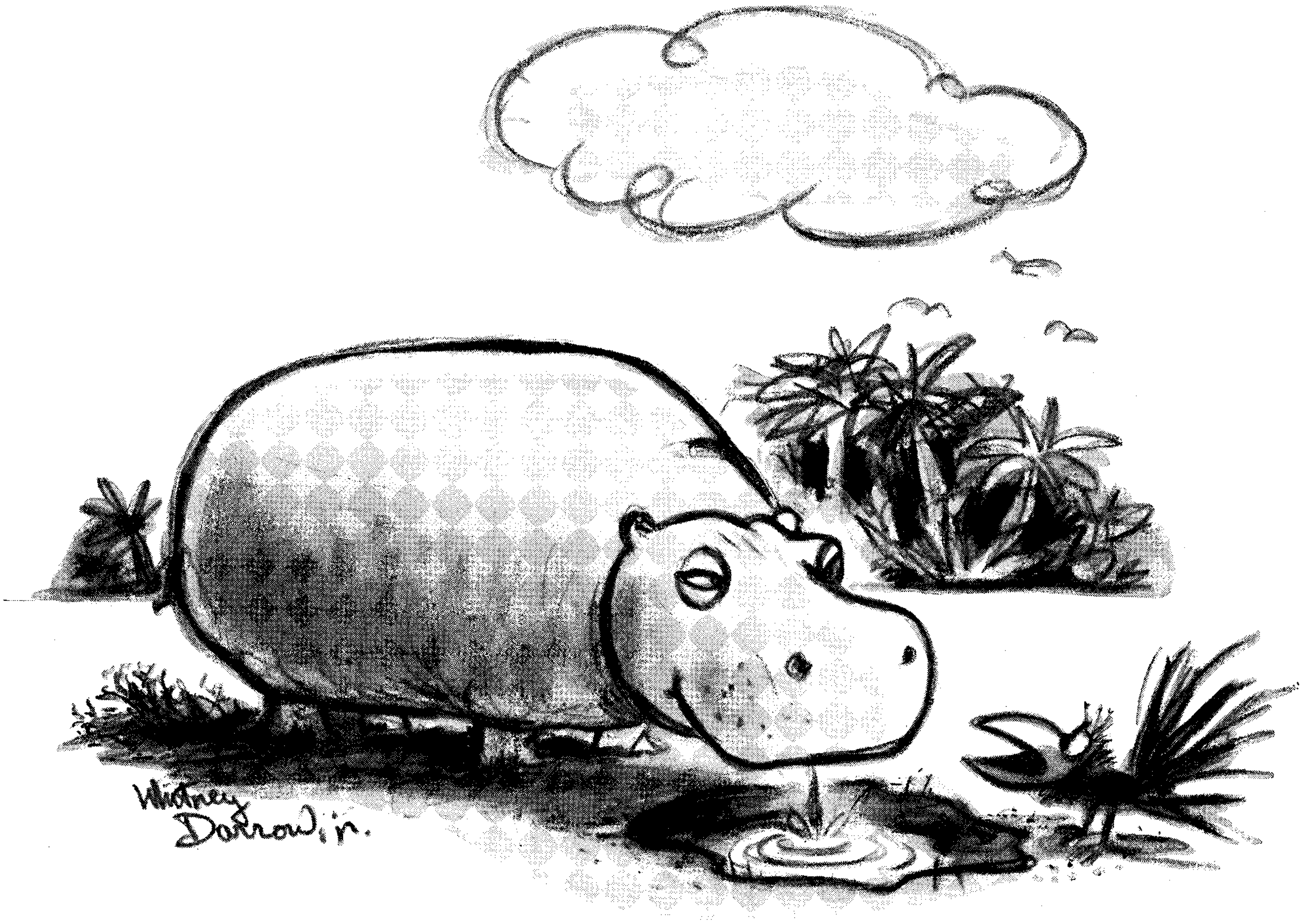
• •

SHE took an inventory and made a list of things in their apartment. Larry had met an insurance man one evening while playing basketball at the gym, who told him that they should have a list of their possessions, in case of theft. "What's worth anything?" she said when he told her. It was their first argument in almost a year—the first time in a year, anyway, that their voices were raised. He told her that several of the pieces of furniture his grandparents gave them when they got married were antiques, and the man at the gym said that if they weren't going to get them appraised every year, at least they should take snapshots of them and keep the pictures in a safe-deposit box. Larry told her to photograph the pie safe (which she used to store linen), the piano with an inlaid mother-of-pearl decoration on the music rack (neither of them knew how to play), and the table with hand-carved wooden handles and a marble top. He bought her an Instamatic camera at the drugstore, with film and flashbulbs. "Why can't you do it?" she said, and an argument began. He said that she had no respect for his profession and no understanding of the amount of study that went into getting a master's degree in chemistry.

That night, he went out to meet two friends at the gym, to shoot baskets. She put the little flashcube into the top of the camera, dropped in the film, and closed the back. She went first to the piano. She leaned forward so that she was close enough to see the inlay clearly, but she found that when she was that close the whole piano wouldn't fit into the picture. She decided to take two pictures. Then she photographed the pie safe, with one door open, showing the towels and sheets stacked inside. She did not have a reason for opening the door, except that she remembered a Perry Mason show in which detectives photographed everything with the doors hanging open. She photographed the table, lifting the lamp off it first. There were still eight pictures left. She went to the mirror in their bedroom and held the camera above her head, pointing down at an angle, and photographed her image in the mirror. She took off her slacks and sat on the floor and leaned back, aiming the camera down at her legs. Then she stood up and took a picture of her feet, leaning over and aiming down. She put on her favorite record: Stevie Wonder singing "For Once in My Life." She found herself wondering what it would be like to be blind, to have to feel things to see them. She thought about the piece of sculpture in the museum—the two elongated mounds, intertwined, the smooth gray stone as shiny as sea pebbles. She photographed the kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, and living room. There was one picture left. She put her left hand on her thigh, palm up, and with some difficulty—with the camera nestled into her neck like a violin—snapped a picture of it with her right hand. The next day would be her first driving lesson.



HE came to her door at noon, as he said he would. He had on a long maroon scarf, which made his deep blue eyes very striking. She had only seen him from her window when he carried the paper in to the old lady. He was a little nervous. She hoped that it was just the anxiety of any teen-ager confronting an adult. She needed to have him like her. She did not learn about mechanical things easily (Larry had told her that he


Whitney Darrow, Jr.

"Save some for me, Fatso."

• •

would have invested in a "real" camera, except that he did not have the time to teach her about it), so she wanted him to be patient. He sat on the footstool in her living room, still in coat and scarf, and told her how a stick shift operated. He moved his hand through the air. The motion he made reminded her of the salute spacemen gave to earthlings in a science-fiction picture she had recently watched on late-night television. She nodded. "How much—" she began, but he interrupted and said, "You can decide what it was worth when you've learned." She was surprised and wondered if he meant to charge a great deal. Would it be her fault and would she have to pay him if he named his price when the lessons were over? But he had an honest face. Perhaps he was just embarrassed to talk about money.

He drove for a few blocks, making her watch his hand on the stick shift. "Feel how the car is going?" he said. "Now you shift." He shifted. The car jumped a little, hummed, moved into gear. It was an old car and didn't shift too easily, he said. She had been sitting forward, so that when he shifted she rocked back hard against the seat—harder than she needed to. Almost unconsciously, she wanted to show him what a good teacher he was. When her turn came to drive, the car stalled. "Take it easy," he said. "Ease up on the clutch. Don't just raise your foot off of it like that." She tried it again. "That's it," he said. She looked at him when the car was in third. He sat in the seat, looking out the window. Snow was expected. It was Thursday. Although Larry was going to visit his parents and would not be back until late Friday afternoon, she decided she would wait until Tuesday for her next lesson. If he came home early, he would find out that she was taking lessons, and she didn't want him to know. She asked the boy, whose name was Michael, whether he thought she would forget all he had taught her in the time between lessons. "You'll remember," he said.

When they returned to the old lady's driveway, the car stalled going up the incline. She had trouble shifting. The boy put his hand over hers, and kicked the heel of his hand forward. "You'll have to treat this car a little roughly, I'm afraid," he said. That afternoon, after he left, she made spaghetti sauce, chopping little pieces of pepper and onion and mushroom. When the sauce had cooked down, she called Mrs. Larsen and said that she would bring over dinner. She usually ate with the old lady once a week. The old lady often added a pinch of cinnamon to her food, saying that it brought out the flavor better than salt, and that since she was losing her sense of smell, food had to be strongly flavored for her to taste it. Once, she had sprinkled cinnamon on a knockwurst. This time, as they ate, Natalie asked the old lady how much she paid the boy to bring the paper.

"I give him a dollar a week," the old lady said.

"Did he set the price, or did you?"

"He set the price. He told me he wouldn't take much, because he has to walk this street to get to his apartment anyway."

"He taught me a lot about the car today," Natalie said.

"He's very handsome, isn't he?" the old lady said.

SHE asked Larry, "How were your parents?"

"Fine," he said. "But I spent almost all the time with Andy. It's almost his birthday, and he's depressed. We went to see Mose Allison."

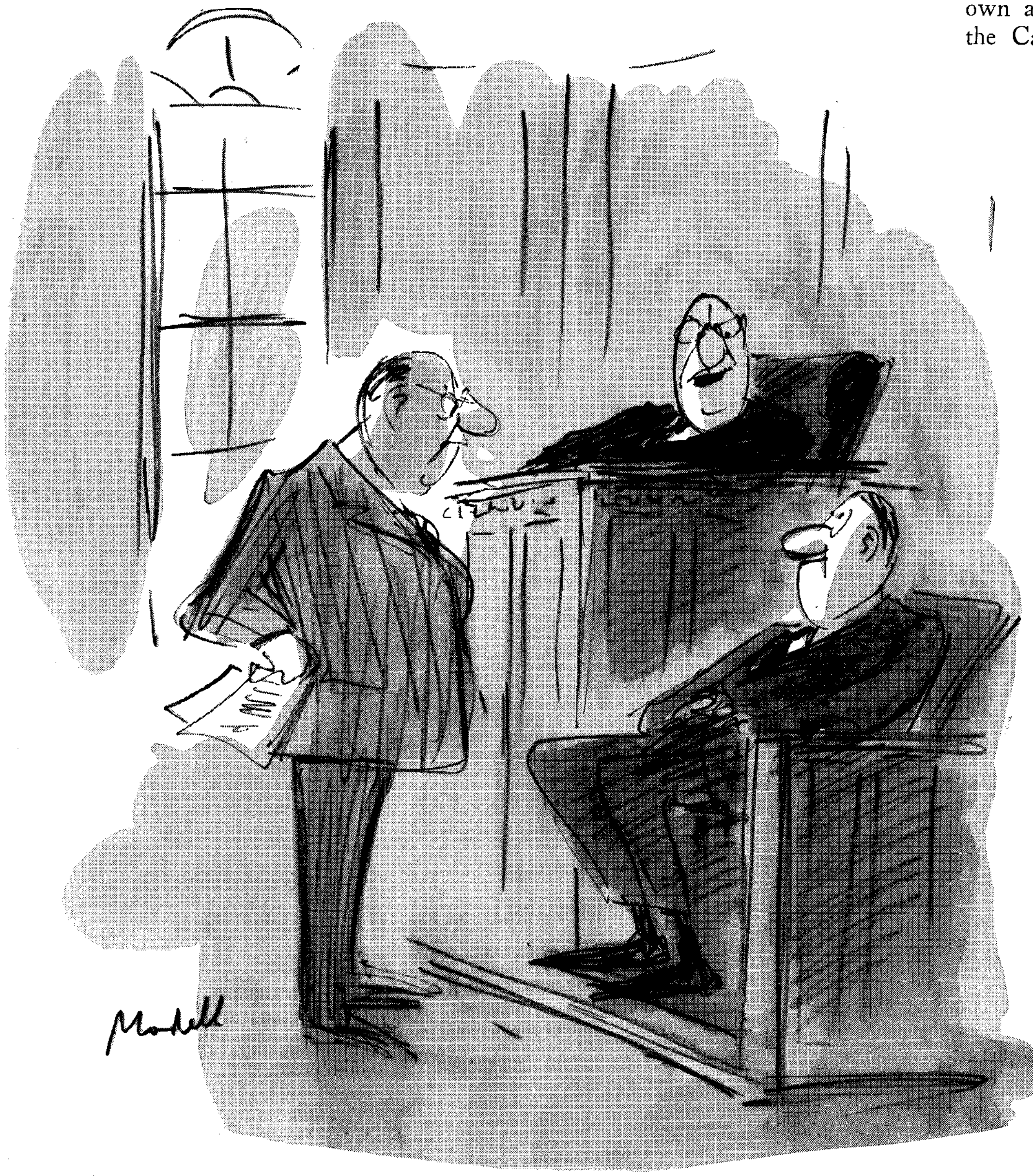
"I think it stinks that hardly anyone else ever visits Andy," she said.

"He doesn't make it easy. He tells you everything that's on his mind, and there's no way you can pretend that his troubles don't amount to much. You just have to sit there and nod."

She remembered that Andy's room looked like a gymnasium. There were handgrips and weights scattered on the floor. There was even a psychedelic pink hula hoop that he was to put inside his elbow and then move his arm in circles wide enough to make the hoop spin. He couldn't do it. He would lie in bed with the hoop in back of his neck and, holding the sides, lift his neck off the pillow. His arms were barely strong enough to do that, really, but he could raise his neck with no trouble, so he just pretended that his arms pulling the loop were raising it. His parents thought that it was a special exercise that he had mastered.

"What did you do today?" Larry said now.

"I made spaghetti," she said. She had made it the day before, but she thought that since he was mysterious about the time he spent away from her ("in the lab" and "at the gym" became interchangeable), she did not owe him a straight answer. That day she had dropped off the film and then she had sat at the drugstore counter to have a cup of coffee. She bought some cigarettes, though she had not smoked since high school. She smoked one mentholated cigarette and then threw the pack away in a garbage container outside the drugstore. Her mouth still felt cool inside.



"Never mind the 'You're not going to believe this.' Just answer the question, yes or no."

He asked if she had planned anything for the weekend.

"No," she said.

"Let's do something you'd like to do. I'm a little ahead of myself in the lab right now."

That night they ate spaghetti and made plans, and the next day they went for a ride in the country, to a factory where wooden toys were made. In the showroom, he made a bear marionette shake and twist. She examined a small rocking horse, rhythmically pushing her finger up and down on the back rung of the rocker to make it rock. When they left they took with them a catalogue of toys they could order. She knew that they would never look at the catalogue again. On their way to the museum, he stopped to wash the car. Because it was the weekend there were quite a few cars lined up waiting to go in. They were behind a blue Cadillac that seemed to inch forward of its own accord, without a driver. When the Cadillac moved into the washing area, a tiny man hopped out. He stood on tiptoe to reach the coin box to start the washing machine. She doubted if he was five feet tall.

"Look at that poor son of a bitch," he said.

The little man was washing his car.

"If Andy could get out more," Larry said. "If he could get rid of that feeling he has that he's the only freak . . . I wonder if it wouldn't do him good to come spend a week with us."

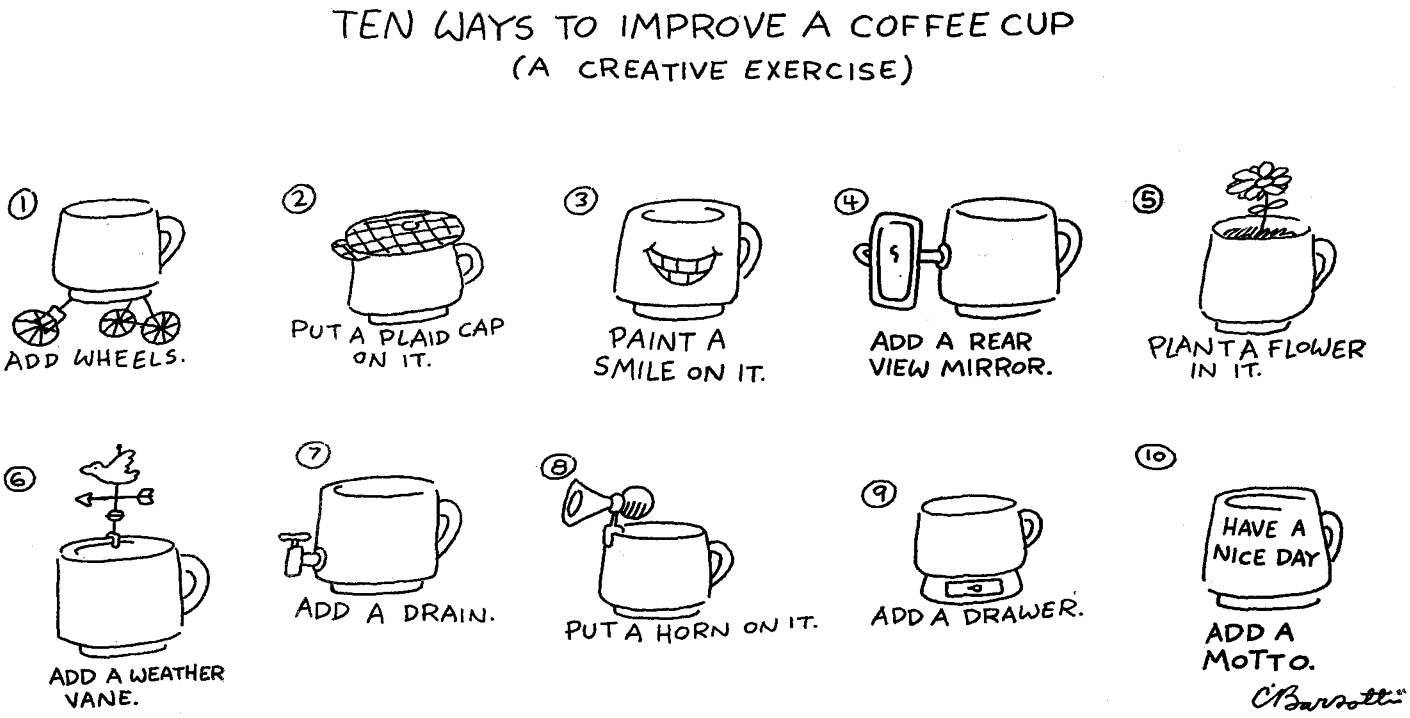
"Are you going to take him in the wheelchair to the lab with you?" she said. "I'm not taking care of Andy all day."

His face changed. "Just for a week was all I meant," he said.

"I'm not doing it," she said. She was thinking of the boy, and of the car. She had almost learned how to drive the car.

"Maybe in the warm weather," she said. "When we could go to the park or something."

He said nothing. The little man was rinsing his car. She sat inside when their turn came. She thought that Larry had no right to ask her to take care of Andy. Water flew out of the hose and battered the car. She


TEN WAYS TO IMPROVE A COFFEE CUP
(A CREATIVE EXERCISE)
① ADD WHEELS.
② PUT A PLAID CAP ON IT.
③ PAINT A SMILE ON IT.
④ ADD A REAR VIEW MIRROR.
⑤ PLANT A FLOWER IN IT.
⑥ ADD A WEATHER VANE.
⑦ ADD A DRAIN.
⑧ PUT A HORN ON IT.
⑨ ADD A DRAWER.
⑩ HAVE A NICE DAY
ADD A MOTTO.
C Barsotti

thought of Andy, in the woods at night, stepping on the land mine, being blown into the air. She wondered if it threw him in an arc, so he ended up somewhere away from where he had been walking, or if it just blasted him straight up, if he went up the way an umbrella opens. Andy had been a wonderful ice skater. They all envied him his long sweeping turns, with his legs somehow neatly together and his body at the perfect angle. She never saw him have an accident on the ice. Never once. She had known Andy, and they had skated at Parker's pond, for eight years before he was drafted.

The night before, as she and Larry were finishing dinner, he had asked her if she intended to vote for Nixon or McGovern in the election. "McGovern," she said. How could he not have known that? She knew then that they were farther apart than she had thought. She hoped that on Election Day she could drive herself to the polls—not go with him and not walk. She planned not to ask the old lady if she wanted to come along, because that would be one vote she could keep Nixon from getting.

At the museum, she hesitated by the sculpture but did not point it out to him. He didn't look at it. He gazed to the side, above it, at a Francis Bacon painting. He could have shifted his eyes just a little and seen the sculpture, and her, standing and staring.

AFTER three more lessons, she could drive the car. The last two times, which were later in the afternoon than their first lesson, they stopped at the drugstore to get the old lady's paper, to save him from having to make the same trip back on foot. After the final lesson, when he came out of the drugstore with the paper she asked him if he'd like to have a beer to celebrate.

"Sure," he said.

They walked down the street to a bar that was filled with college students. She wondered if Larry ever came to this bar. He had never said that he did.

She and Michael talked. She asked why he wasn't in high school. He told her that he had quit. He was living with his brother, and his brother was teaching him carpentry, which he had been interested in all along. On his napkin he drew a picture of the cabinets and bookshelves he and his brother had spent the last week constructing and installing in the house of two wealthy old sisters. He drummed the side of his thumb against the edge of the table in time with the music. They each drank beer, from heavy glass mugs.

"Mrs. Larsen said your husband was in school," the boy said. "What's he studying?"

She looked up, surprised. Michael had never mentioned her husband to her before. "Chemistry," she said.

"I liked chemistry pretty well," he said. "Some of it."

"My husband doesn't know you've been giving me lessons. I'm just going to tell him that I can drive the stick shift, and surprise him."

"Yeah?" the boy said. "What will he think about that?"

"I don't know," she said. "I don't think he'll like it."

"Why?" the boy said.

His question made her remember that he was sixteen. What she had said would never have provoked another question from an adult. The adult would have nodded, or said, "I know."

She shrugged. The boy took a long drink of beer. "I thought it was funny that he didn't teach you himself, when Mrs. Larsen told me you were married," he said.

They had discussed her. She wondered why Mrs. Larsen wouldn't have told her that, because the night she ate dinner with her she had talked to Mrs. Larsen about what an extraordinarily patient teacher Michael was. Had Mrs. Larsen told him that Natalie talked about him?

On the way back to the car, she remembered the photographs and went back to the drugstore and picked up the prints. As she took money out of her wallet, she remembered that today was the day she would have to pay him. She looked around at him, at the front of the store, where he was flipping through magazines. He was tall and he was wearing a very old black jacket. One end of his long, thick maroon scarf was hanging down his back.

"What did you take pictures of?" he said when they were back in the car.

"Furniture. My husband wanted pictures of our furniture, in case it was stolen."

"Why?" he said.

"They say if you have proof that you had valuable things the insurance company won't hassle you about reimbursing you."

"You have a lot of valuable stuff?" he said.

"My husband thinks so," she said.

A block from the driveway, she said, "What do I owe you?"

"Four dollars," he said.

"That's nowhere near enough," she said, and looked over at him. He had opened the envelope with the pictures in it while she was driving. He was staring at the picture of her legs. "What's this?" he said.

She turned into the driveway and shut off the engine. She looked at the picture. She could not think what to tell him it was. Her hands and heart felt heavy.

"Wow," the boy said. He laughed. "Never mind. Sorry. I'm not looking at any more of them."

He put the pack of pictures back in the envelope and dropped it on the seat between them.

She tried to think what to say, of some way she could turn the pictures into a joke. She wanted to get out of the car and run. She wanted to stay, not to give him the money, so he would sit there with her. She reached into her purse and took out her wallet and removed four one-dollar bills.

"How many years have you been married?" he asked.

"One," she said. She held the money out to him. He said, "Thank you," and leaned across the seat and put his right arm over her shoulder and kissed her. She felt his scarf bunched up against their cheeks. She was amazed at how warm his lips were in the cold car.

He moved his head away and said, "I didn't think you'd mind if I did that." She shook her head no. He unlocked the door and got out.

"I could drive you to your brother's apartment," she said. Her voice sounded hollow. She was extremely embarrassed, but she couldn't let him go.

He got back in the car. "You could drive me and come in for a drink," he said. "My brother's working."

WHEN she got back to the car two hours later she saw a white parking ticket clamped under the windshield wiper, flapping in the wind. When she opened the car door and sank into the seat, she saw that he had left the money, neatly folded, on the floor mat on his side of the car. She did not pick up the money. In a while, she started the car. She stalled it twice on the way home. When she had pulled into the driveway she looked at the money for a long time, then left it lying there. She left the car unlocked, hoping the money would be stolen. If it disappeared she could tell herself that she had paid him. Otherwise, she would not know how to deal with the situation.

When she got into the apartment, the phone rang.

"I'm at the gym to play basketball," Larry said. "Be home in an hour."

"I was at the drugstore," she said. "See you then."

She examined the pictures. She sat on the sofa and laid them out, the twelve of them, in three rows on the cushion next to her. The picture of the piano was between the picture of her feet and the picture of herself that she had shot by aiming into the mirror. She picked up the four pictures of their furniture and put them on the table. She picked up the others and examined them closely. She began to understand why she had taken them. She had photographed parts of her body, fragments of it, to study the pieces. She had probably done it because she thought so much about Andy's body and the piece that was gone—the leg, below the knee, on his left side. She had had two bourbon-and-waters at the boy's apartment, and drinking always depressed her. She felt very depressed looking at the pictures, so she put them down and went into the bedroom. She undressed. She looked at her body—whole, not a bad figure—in the mirror. It was an automatic reaction with her to close the curtains when she was naked, so she turned quickly and went to the window and did that. She went back to the mirror; the room was darker now and her body looked better. She ran her hands down her sides, wondering if the feel of her skin was anything like the way the sculpture would feel. She was sure that the sculpture would be smoother—her hands would move more quickly down the slopes of it than she wanted—that it would be cool, and that somehow she could feel the grayness of it. Those things seemed preferable to her hands lingering on her body, the imperfection of her skin, the overheated apartment. If she were the piece of sculpture and if she could feel, she would like her sense of isolation.

This was in 1972, in Philadelphia.

—Ann Beattie

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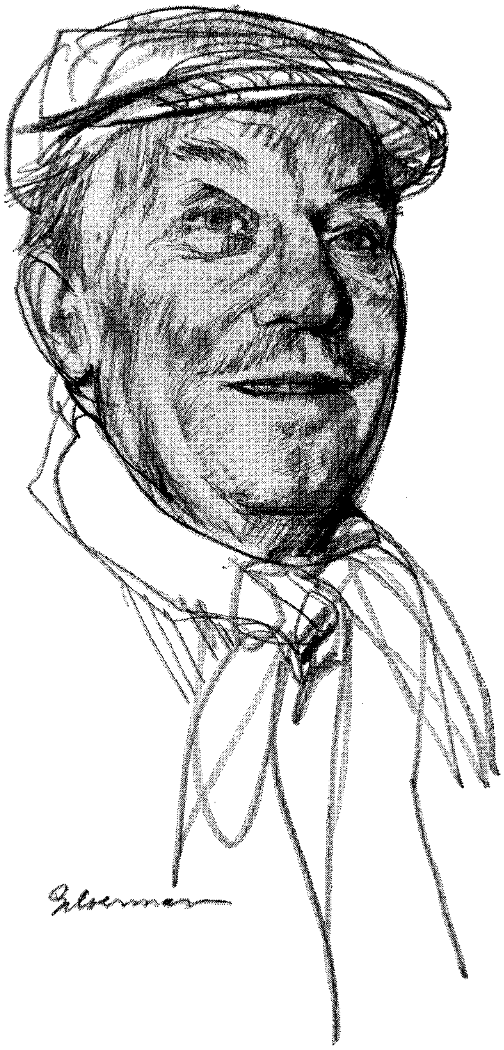
Dr. Verapong flew to Bloomington from Rome where he attended a conference of rice-pudding nations.—*Bloomington (Ind.) Sunday Herald.*

They're always feuding with the tapioca bloc.

PROFILES

AT THREE MINUTES PAST EIGHT YOU MUST DREAM



SIR RALPH RICHARDSON celebrated his seventy-fourth birthday on December 19th of last year, the day after Harold Pinter's "No Man's Land," in which he co-starred with his old friend Sir John Gielgud, ended its Broadway run at the Longacre. Sir Ralph played Hirst, a wealthy Englishman with an awe-inspiring thirst, incessantly slaked, for vodka and Scotch. Hirst is also a famous writer, although we do not discover this until page 67 of the published text (which ends on page 95)—a little late in the day, some may think, for such an important disclosure. Some, indeed, would get downright shirty if another playwright were thus to withhold essential information that could easily have been revealed in the first ten minutes; but when Mr. Pinter does it, audiences marvel at what they have been taught to recognize as his skill in creating an atmosphere of poetic suspense. At all events, Hirst, protected by a pair of sinister servants called Foster and Briggs, lives in a palatial Hampstead house, where he is bearded by Spooner, a threadbare poetaster (played by Sir John), whom he may or may not have cuckolded—Mr. Pinter leaves us in poetic doubt—on the eve of the Second World War. Spooner, who seeks employment as Hirst's secretary, is under pressure throughout the play to quit the household. I don't propose to offer an interpretation of "No Man's Land," but it may not be irrelevant to point out that all of its four characters are named after English cricketers who flourished around the turn of the century. Mr. Pinter is known to be a fanatical lover of cricket—a game in which a batsman (e.g., Spooner) invades the territory of the opposing team (e.g., Hirst, Foster, and Briggs), which then attempts, by a variety of ploys that include bluff, deceit, and physical intimidation, to dismiss him from the field. The dialogue, garlanded with bizarre non sequiturs, is often hilarious. Whether the play is more than a cerebral game is a decision that will have to wait until we see it performed by second-rate actors. Fortunately for Mr. Pinter, the English theatre is well equipped with senior players who can bestow on whatever material comes their way a patina of seignorial magic.

Sir Ralph is one such. Devotees of the Richardson cult—who had last seen their idol on Broadway in 1970, when he appeared (also with Sir John) as a benevolent lunatic in David Storey's "Home"—observed with relief that immersion in Pinterdom had left his professional trademarks unchanged. There was the unique physical presence, at once rakish and stately, as of a pirate turned prelate. There was the balsa-wood lightness of movement, which enabled him to fall flat on his face three times in the course of a single act—a rare feat for septuagenarians. There was the peculiar method of locomotion, whereby he would spring to his feet and, resembling a more aloof and ceremonious Jacques Tati, propel himself forward with the palms of his hands turned out, as if wading through waist-deep water. There was the pop-eyed, poleaxed look, with one eyebrow balefully cocked, whenever he was faced with a remark that was baffling or potentially hostile. Above all, there was the voice, which I once described as "something between bland and grandiose: blandiose, perhaps." Or, as I wrote in another context, when he played "Cyrano de Bergerac" in 1946:

> His voice is most delicate; breath-light of texture; more buoyant even than that of M. Charles Trenet.... It is a yeasty, agile voice. Where Olivier would pounce upon a line and rip its heart out, Richardson skips and lilts and bounces along it, shaving off pathos in great flakes.

A personal note: The noise that Sir Ralph makes has sometimes struck me as the vocal equivalent of onionskin writing paper—suave, crackling, and resonant. This curious association is no doubt strengthened by my memories of his definitive performance as Peer Gynt, in 1944—specifically, of the scene in which Peer tries to find his true identity by symbolically peeling an onion, only to discover that beneath the last layer of skin there is no core of selfhood but, simply and literally, nothing. Sir Ralph has often been at his best when playing men in whose lives, gamely though they keep up appearances, there is a spiritual emptiness, a certain terror of the void. One of his greatest regrets is having turned down Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" in the early nineteen-fifties, when he and Alec Guinness were invited to play the two Godot-forsaken tramps. They were dissuaded in part by Gielgud, who decried the play—in a phrase of which he is now thoroughly ashamed—as "a load of old rubbish." Sir Ralph, then appearing at the Haymarket Theatre in London, asked Beckett to come and discuss the script with him. "I'd drawn up a sort of laundry list of things I didn't quite understand," Sir Ralph recalls. "And Beckett came into my dressing room—wearing a knapsack, which was very mysterious—and I started to read through my list. You see, I like to know what I'm being asked to do. March up that hill and charge that blockhouse! Fine—but I wasn't sure which was the hill and where the blockhouse was. I needed to have a few things clear in my mind. But Beckett just looked at me and said, 'I'm awfully sorry, but I can't answer any of your questions.' He wouldn't explain. Didn't lend me a hand. And then another job came up, and I turned down the greatest play of my lifetime.”

Richardson became an indisputably great actor in the latter half of 1944. Since then, despite some wildly misguided choices of roles, he has continued to ripen. Today, both as a man and as a performer he is more expansive in his uniqueness and his eccentricity than ever before. He is the eldest of a formidable trio of English actors—the others being Gielgud and Laurence Olivier, his juniors by, respectively, two and five years—who were born early in the century, and whose careers, which have frequently crisscrossed, form a map that covers most of the high points of English theatre in the past five decades. (Richardson and Olivier were knighted in 1947; Gielgud had to wait for his accolade until 1953.) Gielgud and Olivier, from their earliest days in the profession, were that godsend to critics, a pair of perfect opposites. You could list their qualities in parallel columns:

GIELGUD	OLIVIER
Air	Earth
Poet	Peasant
Mind	Heart
Spiritual	Animal
Feminine	Masculine
John Philip Kemble	Edmund Kean
Introvert	Extrovert
Jewel	Metal
Claret	Burgundy

Concerning the great Shakespearean parts that both actors have played, the critical consensus is that Gielgud has defeated Olivier as Hamlet and Romeo, while Olivier has knocked out Gielgud as Othello, Antony, and Macbeth. King Lear has outpointed both of them. But where does all this leave Sir Ralph? Very much the odd man out. Many of his greatest Shakespearean successes have been in parts like Falstaff, Caliban, Bottom, and Enobarbus, which the other members of the triumvirate have never attempted. In 1960, he contributed a series of autobiographical pieces to the London *Sunday Times*, in one of which he wrote, “Hamlet, Lear, Macbeth, and Othello are the four glorious peaks of dramatic literature.” Of Macbeth, a role he played in 1952, he said, “I couldn’t do it for nuts—not for a second did I believe in the air-drawn dagger, and if I couldn’t, no wonder no one else did.” In 1938, he failed as Othello, though he cannot have been much helped by his Iago: Olivier, who elected to play the part along Freudian lines, as a man consumed by a smoldering homosexual passion for the Moor, but who neglected to inform Sir Ralph that he intended, in the course of the performance, to kiss him full on the lips. James Agate, the leading London critic of the time, headed his review “Othello Without the Moor.” In it he sombrely concluded:

> The truth is that Nature, which has showered upon this actor the kindly gifts of the comedian, has unkindly refused him any tragic facilities whatever. His voice has not a tragic note in its whole gamut, all the accents being those of sweetest reasonableness. He cannot blaze.

As for Hamlet and Lear, Sir Ralph has avoided them both—wrongly, I think, as far as the latter role is concerned, but this is a point to which I’ll return. “Clearly,” he wrote in 1960, “I don’t belong to the first division. It could be that my place is in doomed second.” Alternatively, it could be just that he lacks the traditional (but now surely outdated) attributes of the tragic hero—the rumbling voice, the aquiline nose, the high cheekbones, the profile of ruined beauty. Critics have written of his “round, sober cheese-face,” his “broad, moony countenance,” which has also been likened to “a sanctified potato.” Interviewed on British TV in 1975, he said, “I don’t like my face at all. It’s always been a great drawback to me.” He is utterly sincere about this, the proof being that although he has been

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we wrote the book on 4-wheel drive

working in the cinema since 1933, he has never seen any of his movies—not even the rushes. "It discourages me," he says of his physical appearance. "I lose confidence in myself." Yet, despite this alleged handicap, and despite his failure to conquer the tragic Big Four, he has remained, both in and out of the classics, a star with an assured place in the Big Three—a wine to be judged on the same level as Burgundy and claret, even if nobody can quite manage to locate the vineyard.

To explain his continued presence in the top trio, a special category had to be invented for him: Ralph Richardson, it was said, represented not the Tragic Hero or the Poetic Hero but the Common Man. I once asked him how he differed as a performer from Olivier. He ruminated for a moment and then replied, "I've not his size or range. I'm a more rotund kind of actor. Laurence is more the spiky sort. I haven't got his splendid fury." Fury, of course, takes many forms that are not explicit, and hearty bluffness can veil many kinds of desolation and misanthropy. To this matter, too, I shall return. During the thirties and early forties, it became an article of theatrical faith that Richardson was Everyman, the chap you cast when you wanted an embodiment of commonplace decency, of sterling (if slightly tongue-tied) honesty—in short, a sort of human dobbin. Not everyone was deceived. Barbara Jefford, a handsome classical actress with whom he has worked at the Old Vic, once said to me, "People called him the epitome of the ordinary man, I suppose because of his round face. They were absolutely wrong. I can imagine him as a kind of Thomas Hardy hero—a plebeian type transmogrified and exalted. But he could never be your average worker." In 1963, she went on, she appeared with Sir Ralph in Pirandello's "Six Characters in Search of an Author." He played the Father, a fictitious creature permanently condemned to a twilit half existence, since the play-within-a-play of which he is the protagonist is never completed. "And, of course, he was superb," Miss Jefford said, "*because he was playing a ghost.* That's the point about Ralph. There's always something spectral about him. He really is a man from Mars." In 1957, he scored a great hit in "Flowering Cherry," Robert Bolt's first stage success, as a dowdy suburban husband with delusions of grandeur. His performance gave the lie to the theory that he was Everyman reborn in Surbiton. "To any role that gives him half a chance," I wrote at the time, "he brings outsize attributes, outsize euphoria, outsize dismay. Those critics who hold that he excels in portraying the Average Man cannot, I feel, have met many Average Men. . . . He gives us fantasy, not normality."

If Sir Ralph was not Everyman, what was he? Two quotations may be helpful. One is from George Jean Nathan: "Drama is a two-souled art: half divine, half clownish." The other is from Sir Ralph himself: "The ability to convey a sense of mystery is one of the most powerful assets possessed by the theatre." If Sir Ralph was the odd man out, the operative word was "odd." Mystery, clownishness, oddity: all of them forms of protective carapace—smokescreens, layers of the onion.

"Since you ask, there was another woman, but I gave her the old heave-ho."

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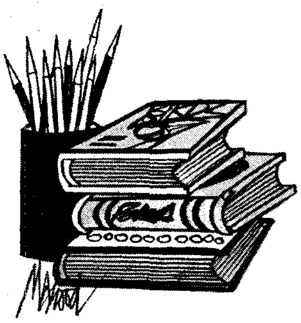
FIRST INTERLUDE: 5 P.M. on June 14, 1976. Interview between Sir Ralph and me at his London house, which is extremely grand—designed by Nash and overlooking Regent's Park. The meeting has been easy to fix: strangely, for a man so deeply private in other respects, he does not bother to have an unlisted telephone number. I have known him slightly for twenty-odd years: Will he remember that I described him in "Macbeth" as "a sad facsimile of the Cowardly Lion in 'The Wizard of Oz' " and as "the glass eye in the forehead of English acting"? I ascend by lift (still a great rarity in London houses) to wait in a resplendent L-shaped living room with floor-to-ceiling windows. My qualms are allayed when he bursts in beaming and asks if I'd care to join him in one of his special cocktails. I accept with thanks. He pads across to a well-stocked drinks table, selects two half-pint tumblers, and pours into each of them three fat fingers of Gordon's gin, followed by a huge slug of French vermouth. I reach out for my drink. He shakes his head and adds a lavish shot of Italian vermouth. I repeat business; he repeats headshake. Into each glass he now pours three *thumbs* of vodka. "That," he says gravely, "is what makes the difference." I can well believe him. Three things are known about Sir Ralph's relationship with alcohol. One: He enjoys it. Two: On working days he restricts himself, until the curtain falls, to a couple of glasses of wine, taken with luncheon. Three: He is never visibly drunk. I recall a story told me by a former director of a famous classical repertory theatre, who wanted Sir Ralph to join the company and went to his home to discuss what parts he might play. "There was this long mahogany table," my informant said. "Ralph sat at one end and put a full bottle of gin in front of me. 'That,' he said, 'is for you.' Then he got another full bottle and placed it at his end of the table. 'And that,' he said, 'is for me.' Then he sat down. 'Now, my dear fellow,' he said, 'what do we want to talk about?' "



I stealthily consult some notes I have made about his career, but before I have framed my first question he says, "I've no idea what we're going to say to each other. After all, where did we come from? Did you ever have a vision of the place we came from before we were born? I did, when I was about three years old. I used to dream about it a good deal. I even drew pictures of it." He leans forward confidentially. "*It looked rather like Mexico*," he says with quiet emphasis. Wind utterly removed from sails, I am silenced: Who else would start a conversation like this? I sip his lethal cocktail, which he leaps up to replenish as soon as the level falls more than half an inch below the rim of the glass. From life before birth it is a short step to life after death. "I've been very close to death," he muses. "It's like dropping into an abyss—very drowsy, rather nice." Is he referring to wartime experiences in the Fleet Air Arm or to the motorbike on which, pipe in mouth, he habitually zooms around London? In a conversation recently recorded in the London *Observer*, Gielgud said to Sir Ralph, "The last time you took me on the pillion, I practically had a fit. I was a stretcher case." Sir Ralph nodded and esoterically replied, "I have been killed several times myself." Meanwhile, he pursues his metaphysical speculations: "God is very economical, don't you think? Wastes nothing. Yet also the opposite. All those galaxies, stars rolling on forever . . ."

By a mighty effort, I turn the conversation to contemporary realities. What does he think, after all these years, of his old partner Olivier? He springs from his seat, arms outstretched above his head. "I *hate* Larry. Until I see him. Then he has more magnetism than anyone I've ever met. Except Alexander Korda. I had a film contract with Korda from 1935 until he died, in 1956. I would go to see him with a furious speech about what I wanted, and what I'd do if I didn't get it. And all the time he'd be staring at my feet. When I'd finished, he'd say, 'Where did you get those marvellous shoes? I'd give anything to have shoes like those.' And I would be defeated." He subsides into a chair. "I admire anyone who has a talent that makes me tingle. Like Chopin, or Conrad, or Pinter, or Beckett. Though not the later Beckett. I am sadly literal-minded, and in Beckett's recent work I find obscurity instead of mystery. And, of course, I worship Ethel Merman."

We talk about Peter Hall, who succeeded Olivier as artistic director of Britain's National Theatre, and for whom Sir Ralph has lately worked in Ibsen's "John Gabriel Borkman" as well as in "No Man's Land." A few months earlier, Hall confided to his associates that Sir Ralph was "the greatest poetic actor alive, with perhaps two or three good years left in him," adding that it was their duty to make sure that he spent these precious days at the National. Accordingly, Hall acquired the rights to "The Kingfisher," a new play written for Sir Ralph by the popular boulevard dramatist William Douglas Home and originally intended for presentation in the commercial theatre. Hall's plan was that after a token run of a few weeks at the National the play should be moved to the West End. The director (Hall) and any stars in his cast would then be remunerated at West End levels, which are considerably higher than those at the National, since they include percentages of the box-office gross. A profitable operation for all concerned—though there were purists who doubted whether the true function of a national theatre was to stage commercial productions for quick money-making transfers to the West End. Sir Ralph makes no claims for the play as a work of art: " 'The Kingfisher' is two bits of cobweb stuck together with stamp edging and sticking plaster. It's about two elderly people—Celia Johnson plays the woman—who very nearly had an affair when they were much younger but didn't quite. He's now an old novelist, and her husband has just died. They try to begin again where they left off all those years ago. Things like that happen all the time. When I was, oh, about twelve, I met a girl named Francesca. I never kissed her, never even touched her, doubt if I saw her more than a couple of times, but as long as I live I shan't forget her."

Topping up our drinks, he lowers his voice. "Don't you think Peter Hall has something *Germanic* about him? I do hope he doesn't get Germanic with the Willie Douglas Home play, because if he does we shall all go down with the Titanic." Pause. Then a broad, beatific smile: "Or the Teutonic." (Since this conversation took place, Hall has had a change of heart. Influenced, perhaps, by the increasingly vocal doubts of the purists, the National has relinquished the play to the commercial theatre, where it will be staged by another director, with Sir Ralph still in the lead but without the aid of public subsidy.)

Before we part, he reminisces about his pet ferret. He really used to have a pet ferret. He washed it every week in Lux soap flakes. (There were rabbits, too, and hamsters. "Whether it's a ferret or a motorbike or a firework," said Barbara Jefford, "he concentrates entirely on his extraordinary enthusiasms. It's a boy we're talking about, a great boy.") "Goodbye, my dear chap," he says, waving me into the lift. I leave feeling (a) that I have known this man all my life, and (b) that I have never met anyone who more adroitly buttonholed me while keeping me firmly at arm's length.

Sir Ralph once said, "I've never given a good performance, that has satisfied me, in any play." Is this false modesty or genuine diffidence? A young actor I know appeared with Sir Ralph in a recent production. One evening, as they stood in the wings awaiting their entrance, Sir Ralph turned to my friend and murmured, "I had a little talent once. A very little talent. If you should ever come across a tiny talent labelled R.R., please let me know." Then the cue came, and he surged imperiously into the spotlight.

* * *

RALPH RICHARDSON was born in 1902 in the intensely respectable West Country town of Cheltenham. His mother was a devout Catholic and his father a Quaker—according to Sir Ralph, "a shortish man with a beard and cold blue eyes," who wore bright-colored waistcoats and taught art at the local Ladies' College. Ralph had two elder brothers, of whom—as of Cheltenham and, indeed, of his father—he remembers very little, since when he was four his mother ran away from home, taking him with her. When he is asked why she bolted, he maintains a silence that may betoken either tact or ignorance. On a minute allowance of two pounds and ten shillings a week, provided by his father, they lived at

Shoreham-by-Sea, in Sussex, in a pair of disused railway carriages standing side by side on the beach and joined together by a tin roof. This meant that they had, in Sir Ralph's words, "a front door and a back door, as well as about twenty side doors." Their neighbors were few. "I had one friend for a time," Sir Ralph has written, "until I was accused of murder." It seems that when he was idly twirling an iron hoop on a stick it flew off and accidentally struck his friend, a small girl, on the head. Unfortunately, her mother was an explosive pioneer feminist on a very short fuse, who came storming out of her nearby bungalow and howled, "You brute! You have killed my daughter!" He had in fact merely grazed her scalp. Since his mother had hopes of grooming him for the priesthood, he was sent to several Catholic schools; one of them was a seminary, from which, to her great disappointment, he ran away. Academic subjects bored him: "I was not passionate enough and had not the character to be rebellious. I think I was just a big oaf."

He recalls from his school days only one moment of fulfillment, when a teacher called on him to get up and recite a passage from Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome." He accepted the challenge and astounded himself. "It frightened the life out of the class, and it frightened the life out of me. They were horrified, they were electrified. It was really very good. I never read again. No one ever asked me to." Around 1910, he and his mother moved to South London, and thence to Brighton, living in a succession of cheap flats, hotels, and boarding houses. "I had no education at all, really," he later told a TV interviewer. "I was sort of professionally ill when I was a little boy." He was forever catching things—mumps, scarlet fever, diphtheria—and his mother, a lonely and possessive woman as well as an expert hypochondriac in her own right, saw to it that he stayed at home as much as possible. There was money on the Richardson side of the family, which included prosperous leather manufacturers in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, but Ralph's father had forfeited his share of the fortune by abjuring commerce and taking to the arts. Even so, the boy remembered his paternal grandfather, controller of the dynastic loot, with fondness:

> He came to take me out in London one day when he was about eighty. Wonderful white beard and very ironic, like a pirate in a good mood. It was my day, he said, and we'd do exactly what I liked. I took him to the Crystal Palace and we spent hours on the switchbacks; he never turned a whisker. I was told afterwards I might have killed him.

What follows could easily be a novel by H. G. Wells modulating into a novel by J. B. Priestley. In 1919, young Richardson is employed as an office boy in a Brighton insurance company. Being a sprightly lad with a taste for heights and none for his job, he amuses himself one day by shuffling his way around the office building on a narrow outside ledge, vertiginously overlooking Brighton High Street. Crowds gather on the sidewalk, watching him in horror. (He later admitted that he was partly motivated by exhibitionism; after all, "the Alpine climber's audience is sparse.") He has timed his exploit to coincide with a period when the boss will be out of the building. His timing is off. The boss reënters his office to find Richardson passing slowly by outside his window, and freezes in the act of removing his hat. Richardson smiles and waves in a friendly manner. Receiving no response, he puts his head in over the top of the window and affably explains, "I was chasing a pigeon." His employer, too nonplussed to take disciplinary action, nods vaguely and makes a mental note: "Richardson is not reliable."

STATESMAN
SOLDIER
PATRIOT
NICE GUY

Soon afterward, Richardson's Newcastle grandmother died—a wealthy woman he had hardly met. When he was six, she summoned him to visit her. He took with him a pet mouse named Kim. The servant who met him at the station shook her head and said, "You'll never be allowed to take that creature up to the big house." "Why not?" said Ralph. "I've been invited to see my grandmother, and I never travel without my Kim." "She won't let it in the house," said the servant. "In that case," said Ralph, "when's the next train back to Brighton?" He stood his ground, and the matriarch was forced to capitulate; but she was so impressed by his stubbornness that she remembered him in her will. In fact, she left him five hundred pounds—a sum large enough to change the course of his life. "Kim cost me sixpence," he reflected later. "It was the happiest buy I ever made."

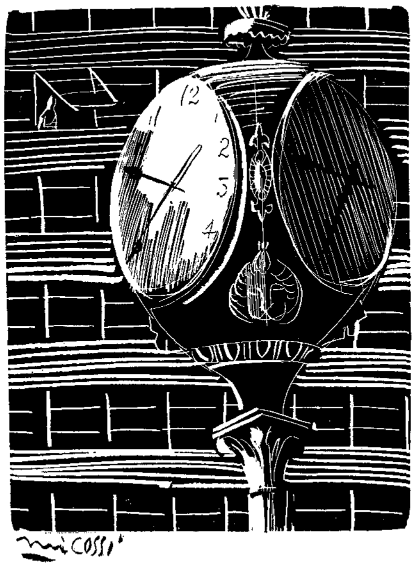
He gave up insurance and enrolled in the Brighton School of Art. But not for long. A few months afterward, Sir Frank Benson and his renowned Shakespearean company appeared at the Theatre Royal, and Richardson went to see them in "Hamlet." This was "the decisive moment that moved my compass," he wrote later. "I suddenly realized what acting was and I thought: By Jove, that's the job for me." He abandoned painting and applied for work with a semi-professional troupe run in Brighton by a stubby, hook-nosed actor-manager named Frank R. Growcott. He chose as his audition piece a speech by Falstaff. Growcott was appalled. "That is quite awful," he said. "It is shapeless, senseless, badly spoken. . . . You could never, never be any good as Falstaff." (This diatribe burned itself into Richardson's mind. When Olivier, a quarter of a century later, asked him to play Falstaff, his first reaction was to say that he couldn't possibly do it.) Nonetheless, Growcott agreed to hire him for six months: During the first half of the engagement he would pay Growcott ten shillings a week, after which Growcott would pay him the same sum. In the following year, 1921, he achieved full professional status. He joined a touring repertory company led by a now forgotten Irish actor called Charles Doran. The Doran productions were rehearsed in London, so Richardson—who until then had never seen a play on the West End stage—was able to study the work of people like Charles Hawtrey ("I think the best actor I've ever seen") and Mrs. Patrick Campbell ("who knocked me flat"). For three years, he toured with Doran, building a solid Shakespearean technique on the basis of parts like Orlando, Macduff, and Bottom. A fellow-member of the troupe was Muriel Hewitt, whom he married in 1924, and later summed up as "the perfect example of the natural actress." They went on to work together at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, which was then the most adventurous regional ensemble in Britain, and in 1926 Richardson made his West End début, in "Yellow Sands," a Birmingham success by Eden and Adelaide Phillpotts that moved to London and ran for over six hundred performances, with Cedric Hardwicke in the leading role. Richardson's wife was also in the cast. In his own words:

> Her career on the stage was brilliant but brief, and her courage was terribly tested, for after a few years of work she fell under some rare nervous attack, perhaps akin to polio, and some years later she died.

"Ralph's first wife contracted some kind of sleeping sickness in Croydon," John Gielgud told me recently. "Her death was long and painful." It finally took place in 1942. "They were devoted to each other," Gielgud added.

Richardson's first real blossoming began in 1930 at the Old Vic, where, over a period of two years, he played a full range of classical roles, among them Prince Hal in "Henry IV, Part I," Caliban, Bolingbroke, Iago, Toby Belch, the Bastard in "King John," Petruchio, Kent in "King Lear," Enobarbus, and Henry V. Gielgud remembers "his marvellous performances of shaggy-dog faithfulness—the kind of part Shakespeare wrote so well," and says, "He was unforgettable as the Bastard and Enobarbus and Kent. And he always gave them a touch of fantasy. But he couldn't bear fights. When I played Hotspur to his Hal, and he had to kill me, he used to count the strokes out loud. 'Come on, cockie,' he'd say. 'One, and two, and three, and four . . .' I never really felt his heart was in it."

By the mid-thirties, he was an established star in modern plays ("For Services Rendered" and "Sheppey," both by Somerset Maugham, and J. B. Priestley's "Eden End") as well as the classics. In 1935, Broadway saw him for the first time, playing the Chorus and Mercutio in "Romeo and Juliet," with Katharine Cornell as the Capulet heiress. A year later, back in London, he plunged into the title role of "The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse," a long-running thriller, in which he was supported by Meriel Forbes, who subsequently became—as she still is—his wife. Thus far, he was a thoroughly respected actor, versatile and dependable, yet somehow earthbound. Agate had written of "his stolid, inexpressive mien, altogether admirable . . . in all delineations of the downright," and the phrase epitomized what up to that point most playgoers felt about him. His stage persona, however, did not reflect the combustible *bizarrerie* of the man within.



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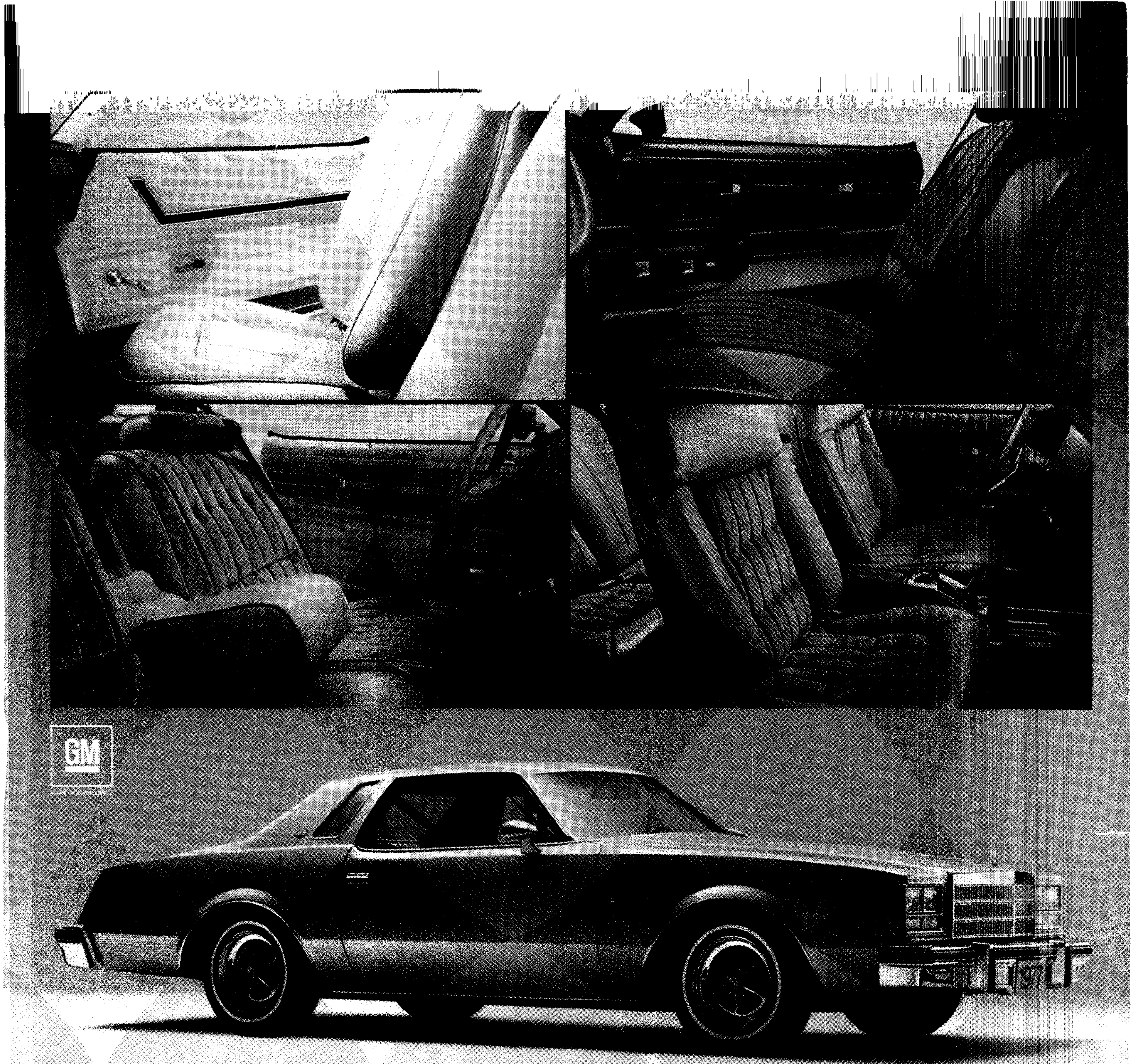
SECOND INTERLUDE: November 5, 1937 or 1938. (None of the surviving participants are quite sure of the year.) It is Guy Fawkes Day, on which the British let off fireworks to celebrate the discovery (and frustration) of a Catholic plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament. It is also Vivien Leigh's birthday. She and Olivier—as yet unmarried, because Olivier's divorce from his first wife, Jill Esmond, is not final—have moved into a tiny house in Chelsea. Miss Leigh has spent months and a great deal of money turning it into (Olivier's phrase) "a perfect little bandbox," full of costly trinkets, with a minuscule garden behind. Instead of giving a large housewarming party, they decide to invite only two old friends—Ralph Richardson and Meriel Forbes, the latter known by the nickname of Mu. What follows is Sir Ralph's account of the festivity, as he recalled it for me last year: "I took great trouble and care. I arrived at the house with Mu and a huge box of fireworks that I had bought with loving joy. I took the biggest rocket out into the garden—it was one of the kind you use to attract attention if your ship is sinking—and there I set it off. It came straight back into the dining room and burned up the curtains and set the pelmet on fire." According to Olivier, it also wrecked a lot of priceless antique crockery and left him and Vivien, who were cowering behind the sofa, blackened about the face like Al Jolson. "I knew that Vivien had taken great trouble with her decorations, and that her pelmet was unpleasantly burned. But it was my *benevolence* that had caused it all. 'Let's get out of here,' I said to Mu. 'These people don't understand us.' I grabbed the doorknob, and through no fault of mine it came off in my hand. I have to admit that I was very hurt, next day, when nobody rang me up to say, 'How kind of you, Ralph, to have thought of bringing those fireworks.' "

Some years later, Sir Ralph mentioned to Olivier that he had given birth to a splendid idea for the National Theatre, should it ever come



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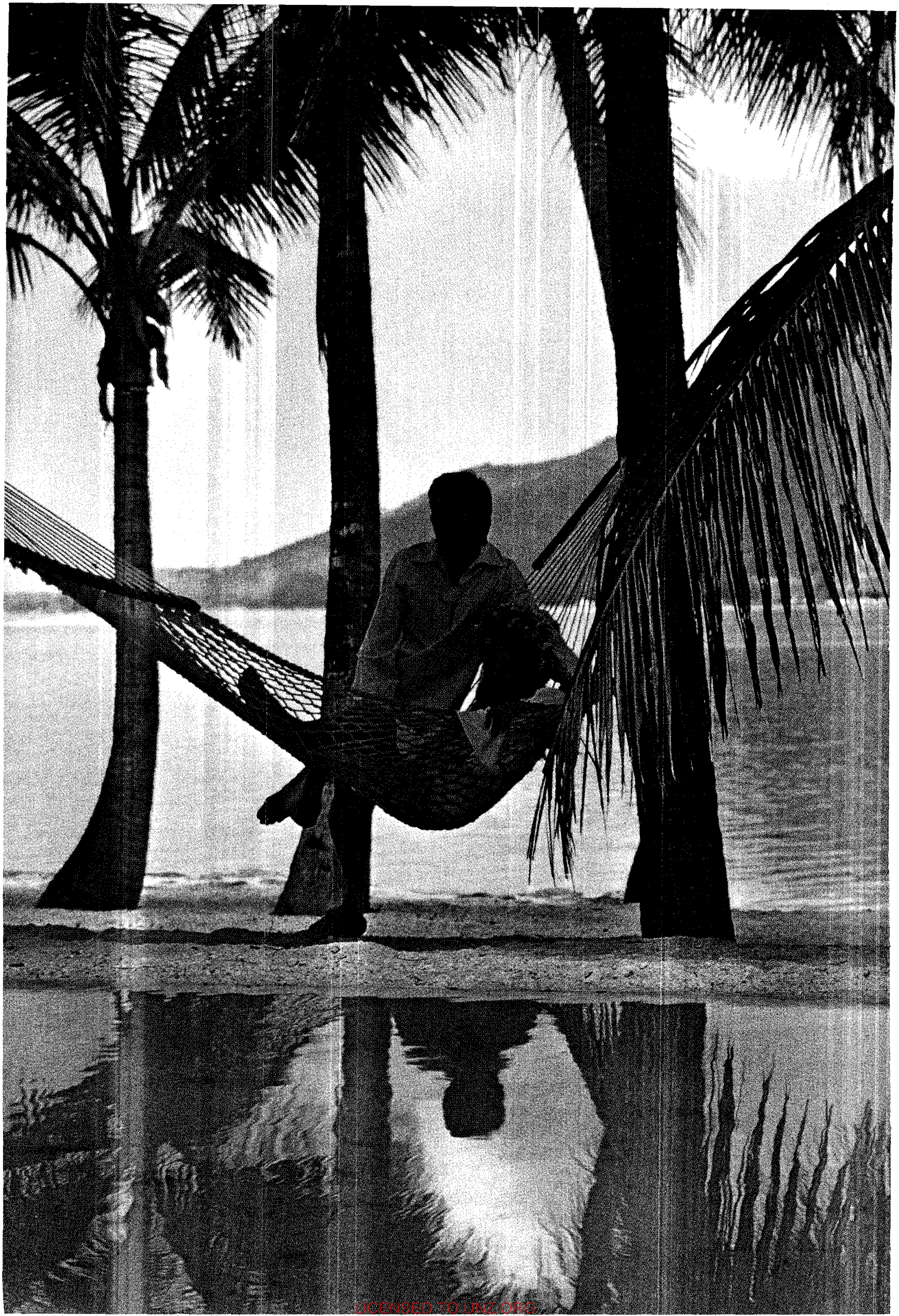

Kia Ora Royale, Tahiti.

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Tahitians – and French Polynesians in general – are people who actually believe that the purpose of life is to be happy. And they drive themselves unmercifully in pursuance of that noble aim. Sometimes they don't even bother to show up for work if they're having too much fun doing something else. And everyone – except a few rigid Westerners – finds that perfectly acceptable.

And for a few days, you become Tahitian. You fish with them, sing with them and drink with them. They'll teach you a toast – *manuia* – that means luck, love, life, happiness and all the good things you can think of. They'll tell you stories and you'll never stop telling them what it's like where you come from. No matter how you try to explain, they still find it incredible that somewhere across the sea lives a strange breed of men who devote their lives to never-ending toil.

Rangiroa. A little O lost in an infinite sea.

You first see this little atoll from the air. A little O lost in an infinite sea. A thin strip of land stretching out in both directions to form an almost perfect circle. A life preserver of solid earth in a completely watery world.

Walk in either direction around this ring and always – always – you end right back where you began. Suddenly you become aware of something you always knew – yet didn't know – that you can't ever be anywhere but where you are. And you experience what *here* means.

Here, on Rangiroa, you live in a Kia Ora village. You sleep in a little thatched hut (faré) and see by lantern light. Yet you experience an epicurean phenomenon that no gourmet worth his palate could pass within two hundred miles and not drop by for a bite to eat. Imagine sitting by the sounding sea, under a thatched roof, being served French haute cuisine on linen by beautiful brown-skinned girls in pareus

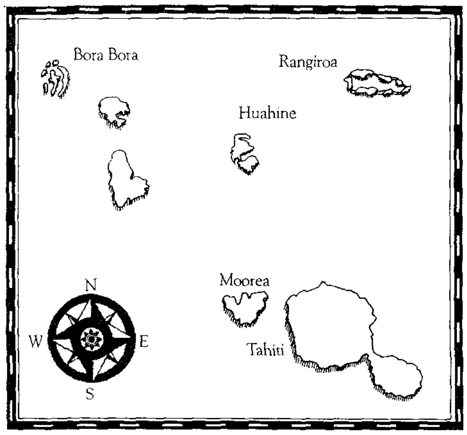
Les belles filles sans merci.

Kia Ora, Rangiroa is a unity of extremes. The civilized and primitive at once. La plus elegante and au naturale. It's fishing from an outrigger canoe while munching on a millefeuille napoleon. It's a shaggy dog named Caesar who wanders in and out of your room at will, a supercilious Maitre d'Hotel named Andre who makes you eat all your haricots verts, and a blonde Tahitian goddess named Elke who drags you out on the reef at night to look for sea shells. It's fresh flowers in your room, a bottle of Romanee-Conti, 1959, les belles filles sans merci lying bare-breasted in the sun and a sign in the lobby that says: "When you go to the village, be sure and cover up. Because the natives are quite modest."

Moorea. A sanctuary for kings.

Moorea – you remember it from the film, *South Pacific* – is as it always was. A place you come to to be rejuvenated. In ancient days vanquished Tahitian warriors came to Moorea to find sanctuary. And it was here that King Pomare came to hide when things got too hot for him on Tahiti.

Like the island itself, the Kia Ora village on Moorea was designed to ease the spirit of its burdens. All you have to do is be there and they begin to disappear. Everything was planned to make that happen. Even the view of Tahiti off on the horizon you get from your faré. Each evening as the sun is setting, a kaleidoscopic Monet appears before your eyes.



No clocks or watches wanted.

Moorea is a timeless place. A place that has no need of maps or clocks. A place where you can't be late because there's nothing to be late to. A place where you do whatever you're doing and are content.

And Kia Ora, Moorea is also timeless. Great care was taken to weave the past into the present. They even pick you up in a horse and carriage. And then there's the famous trading schooner, *Vaitere*, which, under 17 different skippers, made its rounds between the islands carrying copra. Today it's permanently moored off Kia Ora as one of the world's most unique discotheques.

Something happens to you in this magic, timeless spot. A spell is woven. Like the *Vaitere* you become part of where you are now. And like it, you're no longer the same as you once were.

Suddenly your past is gone. Suddenly everything you thought vital to your existence, everything you thought made you you, is gone. Hopes and ambitions, debts and possessions, gone. The noonday brilliance of your life and all its midnight horrors, gone. Everything you left behind, gone. And you're left with only one thing. *Now.*

And when you're riding the surf in an outrigger, you're there with the waves, the wind and a thousand shades of blue. And when you're snorkeling on the reef, you're there playing tag with the fish, darting in and out of castles of coral. And when you're dancing on the *Vaitere*, you're there with the fun and the music.

It doesn't stop when you get back home.

All things that begin must end. And the time comes when you strap your watch back on and fly back home. For the first time in a long time you let your mind slip back into the past. Back to Rangiroa and Moorea. Back still further to other vacations you've experienced. Remember how all those nagging problems you left behind came crashing in on you when you got back?

"This time, whatever you do," you say to yourself as you step off the plane, "you're not going to get caught up in it again." Then that little voice speaks up – you know, that nasty little fellow that keeps chattering at you all the time about all the things you've got to do. "Quit kidding yourself, pal," it says, "you're caught up in it already."

It's been almost a year since I got back. And I know that little voice was lying. I didn't get caught up in it. Not entirely. I know I didn't because every so often I find myself being right where I am, doing whatever I happen to be doing. Like I am *now* as I write of my experiences. Just as I was *then* as I was living them.

I can't prove it but I still believe it's true: Once you experience things as you do on a tour like this, you'll go on experiencing them that way – every once in a while – for the rest of your life. Like it or not.

Manuia,
Jack Raymond.

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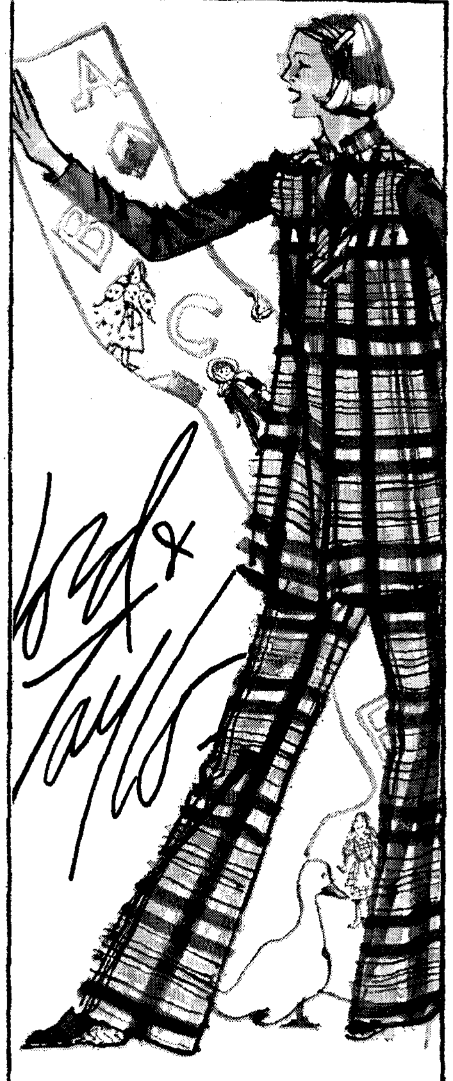

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into being. Every night (he said), as the curtain went up, a synchronized rocket should rise from the roof of the theatre, to inform the populace that an event of national significance was about to take place. It would be known as Ralph's Rocket. This suggestion was adopted, and in March, 1976, when the National Theatre finally moved into its new home, on the south bank of the Thames, the first rocket was duly launched. Sir Ralph himself lit the fuse.

•

IT was not until 1944, after five wartime years spent as a pilot in the Fleet Air Arm, that Ralph Richardson's great period began. He outgrew his humility, burst the bounds of sobriety that had theretofore constrained him, and started to allow his fantasy free flight. "He had always wanted to be a matinée idol," Gielgud says, "and felt inadequate because he couldn't be." Or, as Barbara Jefford puts it, "he was always a wonderfully flexible film performer—better in many ways than Gielgud or Olivier—but he never had the obvious good looks you expect of The Great Actor." Now that he had entered his forties, this lack of physical glamour began to seem less important. He joined the revived Old Vic company, which was to be temporarily housed at the New Theatre, in the West End, since its original (and much humbler) home, south of the Thames, had been gutted by German bombs. Richardson shared the artistic directorship with Olivier and a promising newcomer named John Burrell, and launched the inaugural season, on August 31, 1944, by playing the title role in "Peer Gynt." Tyrone Guthrie directed, with assistance "in grouping and movement" from Robert Helpmann, then at the height of his powers as dancer and choreographer. Sybil Thorndike, Margaret Leighton, and Olivier (in the small but spine-chilling part of the Button-Molder) were in the supporting cast; and Richardson, as the peasant who circumnavigates the globe in fruitless search of self-fulfillment, gave the most poetic performance of his life—volatile, obsessed, constantly surprising. (He has said that Peer Gynt, who is "a little mad," is his favorite part.) In the same season, he played Bluntschli, the pragmatic soldier in Shaw's "Arms and the Man;" Richmond to Olivier's overwhelming Richard III; and Uncle Vanya in the tender, unsparing play of that name. In the autumn of 1945, he opened as Falstaff in both parts of Shakespeare's "Henry IV." These were the productions that—coupled with those left over from the previous season, and augmented by the flabbergasting double bill in which Olivier played Sophocles' Oedipus and (after the intermission) Mr. Puff in Sheridan's "The Critic"—established the high-water mark of English acting in the twentieth century.

"Falstaff," Sir Ralph wrote in 1960, "proceeds through the plays at his own chosen pace, like a gorgeous ceremonial Indian elephant." As an undergraduate at Oxford, I said of his performance, "Here was a Falstaff whose principal attribute was not his fatness but his knighthood. He was Sir John first and Falstaff second." I continued:

> The spirit behind all the rotund nobility was spry and elastic. . . . There was also, when the situation called for it, great wisdom and melancholy. ("Peace, good Doll! do not speak like a death's head: do not bid me remember mine end" was done with most moving authority.) *Each word emerged with immensely* careful articulation, the lips forming it lovingly and then spitting it forth. In moments of passion, the wild white halo of hair stood angrily up and the eyes rolled majestically; and in rage one noticed a slow, meditative relish taking command . . . it was not a sweaty fat man, but a dry and dignified one. . . . He had good manners and also that respect for human dignity which prevented him from openly showing his boredom at the inanities of Shallow and Silence. . . . He was not often jovial, laughed seldom, belched never. . . . After the key-cold rebuke [from Prince Hal, once his fellow-boozer, now his monarch], the old man turned, his face red and working in furious *tics* to hide his tears. . . . "I shall be sent for soon at night."

But we know, of course, that he will not. Of the preceding scenes, lyrically comic, set in a twilit Gloucestershire orchard, where Falstaff basks in the sycophantic adulation of Justice Shallow (Olivier), a shrivelled drinking crony of his youth, I see no reason to revise what I wrote thirty years ago: "If I had only half an hour more to spend in theatres, and could choose at large, no question but I would have these." In the 1946-47 season, Sir Ralph's exuberant, opportunistic performances as Cyrano de Bergerac and Face, the scheming servant in Jonson's "The Alchemist," set the seal on his new reputation. Always excepting Olivier, no actor in England was riding higher.

•

THIRD INTERLUDE: The summer of 1946. Ralph and Meriel Richardson are motoring down to spend the weekend at Notley Abbey, in Bucking-

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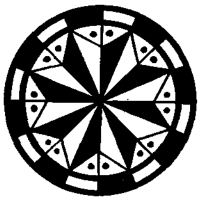
hamshire. The Oliviers have recently acquired the fifteenth-century abbot's lodge, and converted it, at ridiculous expense, into a stately home. Stopping his car on the brow of a hill that overlooks the abbey and its domain, Richardson turns to Mu and says (they both recall the exact words), "I hope to God I don't put my foot in it this time." Since the Chelsea holocaust, purely social contacts between the two couples have been limited—mainly because the war has kept them apart but also because of a lingering sense (on Mrs. Olivier's part) that there is something inherently hazardous, almost poltergeistic, about Richardson's presence.

The day passes sweetly. The guests are shown over the estate. Across a candlelit dinner table, good stories are told, and plans made for the future of the Old Vic. Richardson conducts himself with extreme caution, a man walking on eggshells. Olivier talks of the abbey's history, and of some remarkably preserved frescoes painted by the monks on beams in the attic. Wouldn't the Richardsons (he suggests after dinner) like to come up and see them? Mu declines the invitation; her husband, the model guest, accepts. The men having left, the wives chat over their coffee. Mrs. Olivier feels obscurely uneasy, but after five, ten, fifteen minutes have passed without incident, she is ready to scoff at her qualms. At this moment, there is a prolonged splintering noise from above, followed by a colossal crash that makes the whole house shake. The women dash upstairs, where, in the main guest room, lovingly decorated under Mrs. Olivier's personal supervision, they find Richardson flat on his back and covered in plaster, on a bed that has collapsed under his weight. Above it there is a gaping hole in the ceiling, through which he has evidently fallen. It emerges that the attic has no floor and can be traversed only on narrow rafters. Olivier had brought a flashlight, with which he directed Richardson's attention to the paintings on the beams above their heads. Two versions exist of what happened next. According to Sir Ralph, "Larry said to me, 'Why don't you take a step back to see the pictures better?'" Olivier denies this, saying, "Ralph just whirled round in pure wonderment and toppled off." At all events, Mrs. Olivier was seen to be foaming with rage, like a Cassandra whose prophecies of doom have gone unheeded.



"I felt pretty dogsbody, I can tell you," Sir Ralph remarked to me later. At the time, he thought himself slightly more sinned against than sinning, but he now admits that his hostess had some cause to be upset. "There was a rational basis to Vivien's fury, which we must salute," he said to me the other day. "If you prod a tigress twice in her lair, you must not expect her to purr."

•

KNIGHTED (along with Olivier) in 1947, his film career thriving, Sir Ralph was at his perihelion when, in a fit of collective paranoia, the governors of the Old Vic did an extraordinary thing. Fearing that the company had lost its identity as a people's theatre offering high art at low prices, and was in danger of becoming a gilded playground for West End stars, they fired the entire directorship at a stroke, without warning, in the middle of the 1948-49 season. "We felt rather badly treated," Sir Ralph told me years afterward, with the stoicism of hindsight, "but a fired butler doesn't complain of his master."

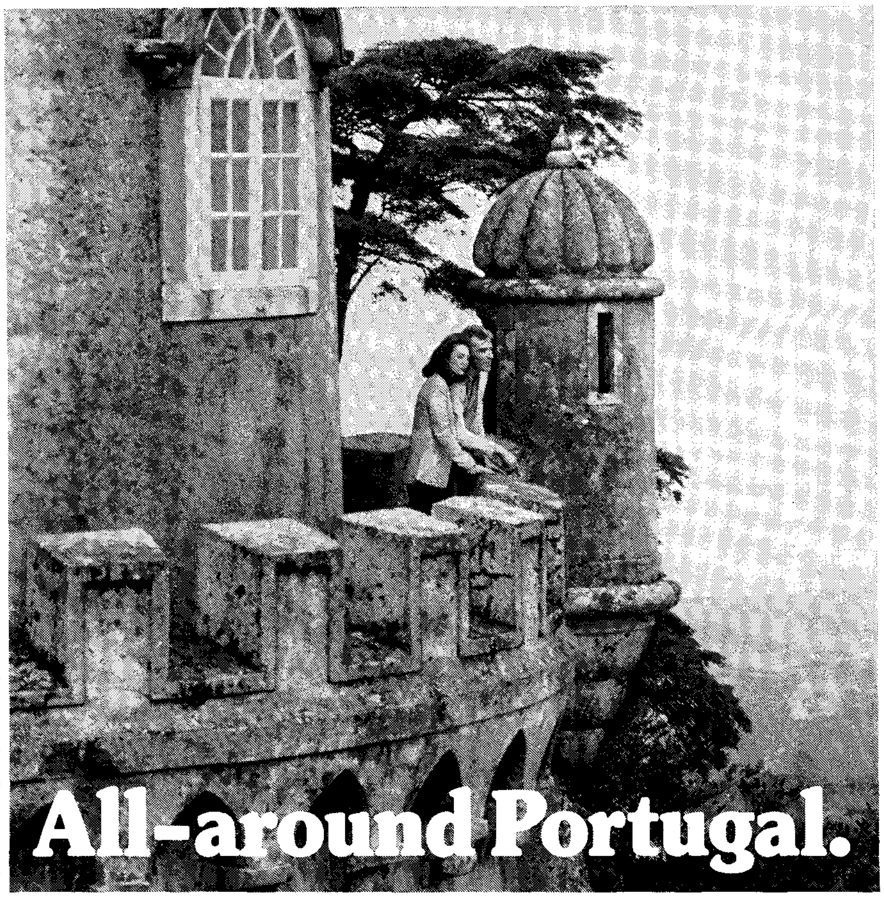
Burrell, Olivier, and Richardson were jobless overnight. It did not, of course, take them long to find other employment; but the three men, despite differences of temperament, had formed a spectacularly successful and cohesive team, like a jazz trio in which contrasting styles coalesce into a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. The decision to axe them changed the course of theatrical history in England, and, during the years that followed, Sir Ralph, bereft of the stimulation that group leadership can provide in the theatre (for the leaders no less than the led), sometimes looked a little lost. Something he said of his colleagues in the Fleet Air Arm may also apply to his co-directors at the Vic: "They brought the best out of you by being so absolutely certain you'd got the best in you." He continued, of course, to have his triumphs—as Peggy Ashcroft's glacially possessive Papa in "The Heiress" (adapted from Henry James's "Washington Square" and directed by Gielgud) and as Vershinin, the philosopher-philanderer in Chekhov's "Three Sisters." But the creative interplay, the artistic checks and balances, the argumentative crosscurrents of the Old Vic days had gone forever. Thenceforward, Sir Ralph was on his own.

His plague year was 1952, in which he went to Stratford-upon-Avon to play Prospero, Macbeth, and Volpone, and failed in all three. He said himself, "I don't know which was the worst." The night I saw his Volpone, many of the lines eluded him, and replacements were smuggled in from other plays. At one point, he stunned his fellow-actors by addressing them as "Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves," and went on (since there was clearly no going back) to favor us with the rest of the famous speech from "The Tempest" which begins with that phrase. In 1953, having seen him in "The White Carnation," a puny play by R. C. Sherriff, I wrote:

> He has taken to ambling across our stages in a spectral, shell-shocked manner, choosing odd moments to jump and frisk, like a man through whom an electric current is being intermittently passed.

The year 1956 brought us a most erratic "Timon of Athens," containing "gestures so eccentric that their true significance could be revealed only by extensive trepanning." But even at his most aberrant he remained supremely watchable. Once the curtain had risen, you could never be sure (nor, it seemed at times, could he) what he would do next. A moment of pure dottiness might be followed by a flash of revelation. More and more, he was bringing the aura of his own private world onto the stage with him, like a glass bell with which to protect himself from the audience—for whom, in any case, he had never felt any overpowering fondness. "I'm rather inclined," he told a man from *The Guardian* last year, "to think of them as a cage of bloody tigers that will bite you, and will put you out of the stage door if they can. . . . You must never let them command." (Even the theatregoers of Brighton, to whose applause he had so often bowed during his apprenticeship, he described in 1975 as "very dangerous.") A master of all the stratagems of self-protection, he has always been extremely wily if he suspects that an attempt is being made, in Hamlet's phrase, to pluck out the heart of his mystery. Not long ago, he and Gielgud were photographed by Jane Bown, of the London *Observer*. She had hardly arrived when Sir Ralph began to profess amnesia about his identity. "The trouble is I can never remember who I am whenever I'm photographed. Who *am* I? I find I'm no one in particular."

"However close you get to him, he's still distant," Barbara Jefford says. "In life and onstage, he has a kind of remote intimacy. When you're acting



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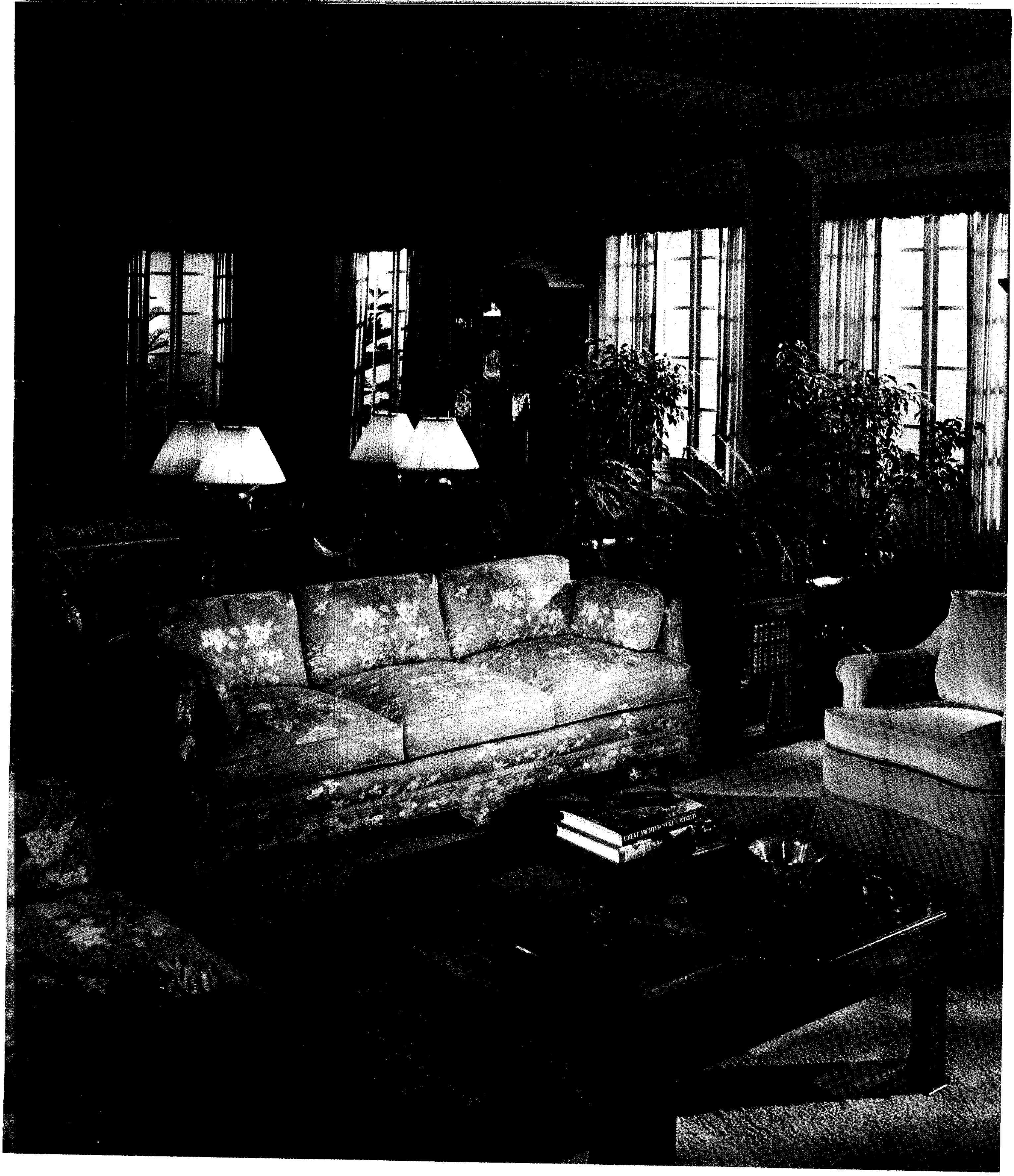
with him, there’s no eye contact. He never looks at you. And he never touches people onstage. I played his stepdaughter in ‘Six Characters in Search of an Author,’ and there’s a big scene where he’s supposed to grope me. He never even touched me. And yet I’m told the audience got a very sensual impression from the whole scene.” The play was staged by the American director William Ball. Miss Jefford recalls, “The most typical thing that Ralph did happened during rehearsals. One morning, Bill called the company together and said, ‘Today, I want us all to throw away our scripts and improvise our way through the play.’ Ralph didn’t say a word. He was perfectly polite. He just quietly rose and left the room. Oh, he was *about*, he didn’t leave the building, but he didn’t come back to that room. He couldn’t bear the thought of *exposing* himself like that.”

IN 1964, as part of the festivities in honor of the quatercentenary of Shakespeare’s birth, the British Council sent Sir Ralph on a tour of Mexico (his prenatal homeland), South America, and Europe, playing Shylock in “The Merchant of Venice” and Bottom in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.” Miss Jefford went along as Portia and Helena. Lady Richardson, although she had never before appeared in Shakespeare, decided at the last moment to volunteer her services as Titania. I saw “The Merchant” before it left England. It had a lot of very old-fashioned sets, with equally old-fashioned blackouts between scenes, and was memorable chiefly for Sir Ralph’s physical appearance. He wore a bright-yellow skullcap, set off by lurid green makeup, and he brandished what I took to be a shepherd’s crook. “He looks like the Demon King in a pantomime,” a junior member of the cast had told me, with awe in his voice, before the performance. I paid a brief visit to Sir Ralph’s dressing room afterward. When I asked about the shepherd’s crook, he explained that, although he based his interpretation on the assumption that Shylock was “a gent,” it was vital not to forget that “the Jews were a race of nomadic shepherds.” He added, “Shylock knows all about breeding sheep. Look at his speech about Jacob and Laban and the ewes and the rams—typical piece of Shakespearean illumination.” The notion of a pastoral Shylock was something I was not quite ready for, and, as I remember, our conversation ended there. During the months that followed, however, I often thought of this strange, glaucous, eerily imposing apparition, and what the citizens of Lima or Buenos Aires must have made of it as it came looming at them over the Andes. Miss Jefford has vivid memories of Sir Ralph off duty during the three-month tour. “In Latin America, he became intensely English, very much the squire, with a yellow waistcoat and a panama hat at a jaunty angle.” In another vignette, he is standing beside her in the wings, watching his wife—an excellent actress in modern roles—tackling Titania. “She tries very hard,” he muses. “But”—and here he mimes the gestures of a violinist—“she hasn’t got the *bowing*.”

He and Miss Jefford met in 1956, when they were at the Old Vic together, though not in the same plays. “He was only in ‘Timon,’ so I didn’t know him at all, but one night he came to see me as Imogen in ‘Cymbeline.’ Next day, I got one of his beautiful little notes, written in exquisite script, so delicately arranged on the page, with wide, wide margins all covered with little sketches. He said that in the bedroom, when Iachimo creeps out of the trunk to examine me, he thought my *sleep* was especially convincing. Rather an odd tribute, considering that I didn’t move a muscle throughout the scene. But I appreciated it.” A great Richardson fan, Miss Jefford concedes that he was below his best as Shylock. She says shrewdly, “He’s not good at portraying *mundane* sins and desires. There isn’t enough poetry in Shylock for Ralph.” She agrees with me that he ought to have a crack at King Lear. There’s no doubt that he would be heartbreaking in the final exchanges with Cordelia:

> We two alone will sing like birds i’ the
> cage:
> When thou dost ask me blessing, I’ll
> kneel down,
> And ask of thee forgiveness.

In these passages, Lear has fought his way through to a simplicity and an emotional sanity that lie on the far side of complexity and madness. (It is the early Lear, the capricious and egocentric despot of the opening scene, who is truly mad.) I have heard it objected that Sir Ralph lacks the vocal firepower for the “Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks” aria on the storm-blasted heath; but the point, nearly always forgotten, about this speech is that Lear is not attacking the storm or trying to shout it down. Its fury con-



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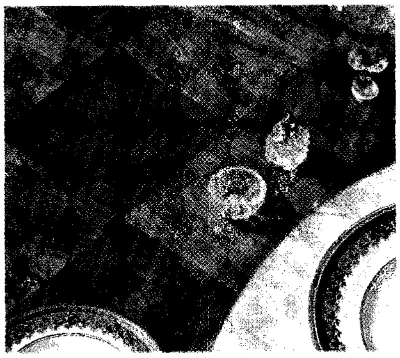

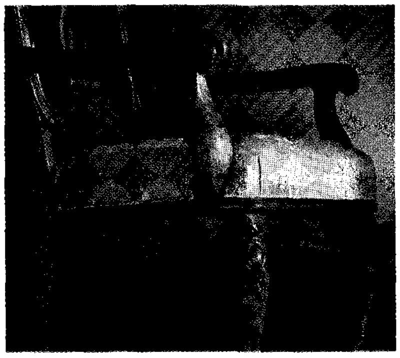

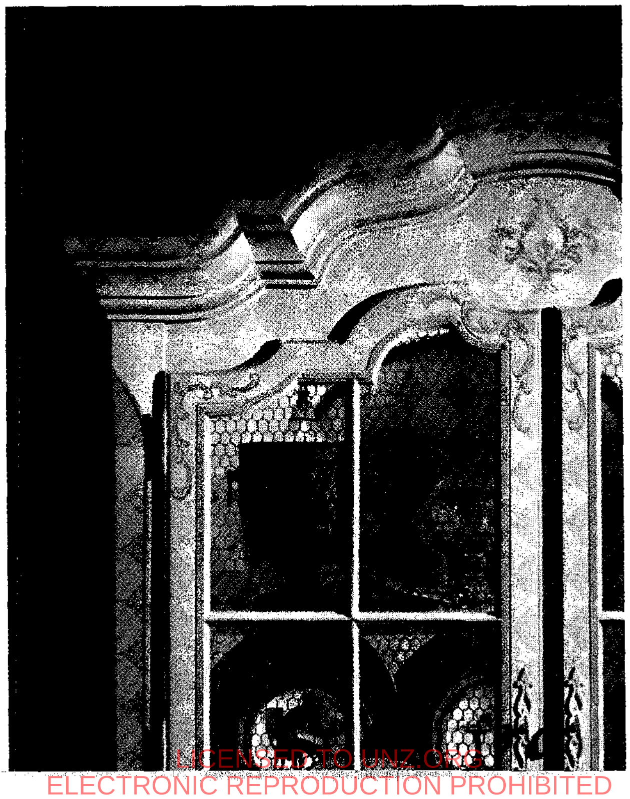

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firms his misanthropy: *he is on its side.* Played thus (as I have yet to see it played), the speech would be well within Sir Ralph's compass.

At 5 P.M. on November 11, 1976, I visit Sir John Gielgud in his suite at the Drake Hotel in New York. My host is spruce, poker-backed, voluble, eyes wickedly gleaming—a lighthouse spraying words instead of candlepower. "It's true that Ralph is wary about the audience," Sir John says. "He watches it like a hawk. Quite often he'll say to me, 'Did you notice that man in the fifth row groping that girl during the second act?' " We talk about "No Man's Land": "I always think that Hirst, the character Ralph plays, is very much like Hamm, the hero of Beckett's "Endgame"—a sort of tyrant who's dominated by his domestic staff. Did you know, by the way, that Larry wanted to play the part? I think Ralph is so marvellous in the second act, when he's doing his bland-clubman stuff. In some ways, he's the great successor to A. E. Matthews." (Not, perhaps, the most overwhelming of tributes: Matthews, a brilliantly accomplished light comedian who went on acting into his eighties, was never regarded as a player of the first rank.) Since the two knights co-starred in "Home" seven years ago, they have been endlessly interviewed and photographed together, and are frequently mistaken for one another on the street. "We're like the Broker's Men in 'Cinderella,' " Gielgud says, referring to a pair of slapstick clowns in traditional English pantomime. For interview purposes, he and Sir Ralph have evolved what amounts to a double act, in which certain routines and catch phrases (including the one about the Broker's Men) ritually recur. There's usually a formal exordium, such as the following, taken from the London *Observer* in October, 1975, during the West End run of "No Man's Land":

> Sir Ralph: You're looking very well, by the way.
> Sir John: Thank you.
> Sir Ralph: I haven't seen much of you lately.
> Sir John: We meet in costume.
> Sir Ralph: We meet as other people.

These encounters, normally held in restaurants at lunchtime, seldom pass without providing opportunities for Sir Ralph, a fervent and mercurial gourmet, to leap into action. Here are three examples:

> I love bread so much; I want it to be taken out of my temptation. I have made a vow. I am going to give up my beautiful rolls. (*The Guardian*, November, 1976.)

> It has been my experience, in the past, that most of the wine served in American restaurants is cat's urine, disguised in French labels. (Luncheon with present writer, though without Gielgud, November, 1976.)

> Sir Ralph (*suddenly jumps, points to his plate dramatically. Waiters surround him.*): What is THAT?
> Sir John: I think it's a bit of liver, Ralph.
> Sir Ralph: Never touch it. Take the liver away.... Bear the offending liver away. (*The Observer*, *op. cit.*)

This confirms what Gielgud now tells me—that Sir Ralph, though a superb host, is not a good guest. "I eat out of tins, but Ralph always insists on the best." From the same *Observer* interview, Gielgud recalls Sir Ralph's response when Peter Brook was mentioned as a director of world renown:

> Sir Ralph: What was that *terrible* production Brook did?... That *ghastly* thing. You were in it.

He was referring to Seneca's "Oedipus," directed by Brook for the National Theatre, in which Gielgud played the protagonist. It was far from ghastly, at least in my opinion; I was working for the National at the time and selected the play for its repertoire. I don't deny, however, that there were unusual elements in Brook's staging, notably in his handling of the chorus. Let Sir Ralph continue:

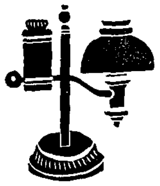
> Sir Ralph: When I went to see the production, somehow I hadn't got a programme. So I said to Mu, 'Leave it to me.' And I went down the aisle to a chap, but he was lashed to a pillar. I didn't know what was going on. It turned out that he was in the show. I think he was one of the chorus. But the show hadn't started yet. Mu said, 'Did you get a programme?' And I had to say it wasn't possible because all the programme-sellers were lashed to the dress circle. Very strange.
> Sir John: But what did the poor actor who was lashed to the pillar say to you?
> Sir Ralph: Well, of course, when I asked him for a programme all I got were these strangled sounds. He was gagged, you see. The whole experience upset me very much. I'm a very *square* man.

Gielgud first appeared with Sir Ralph in 1930, and has enormous respect for his old confrere. "He loves the craftsmanship of his art. He prepares his work and exhibits it with the utmost finesse. It's like Edith Evans—she used to open a window to her heart and then slam it shut, so that you'd come back the next night to see more. My own tendency, on the other hand, is always to show too much. Ralph says he never thinks anything he does is a success. He doesn't even want to repeat his Falstaff. I wish he would; it's his greatest performance. And he was wonderful as John Gabriel Borkman at the National last year. I shall never forget the noise he made when Borkman died. As if a bird had flown out of his heart."

We sip white wine while Gielgud recalls Sir Ralph as he first knew him: "He had a very unhappy early life as an actor. He used to walk with his behind stuck out, and thought he was terribly unattractive to women. He was very poor, and then there was his first wife's dreadful illness. But now he's acquired such control of movement, such majesty. Of course, he does have a violent side to his nature—a powerful sadistic streak, sudden outbursts of temper. But you have to remember that he went through a really wretched time before he was able to marry Mu." Gielgud smiles. "He used to expect her to be the perfect hostess during dinner, and then, after coffee was served, to kick up her legs like a chorus girl. It must have been difficult, at times, to reconcile those two demands."

•

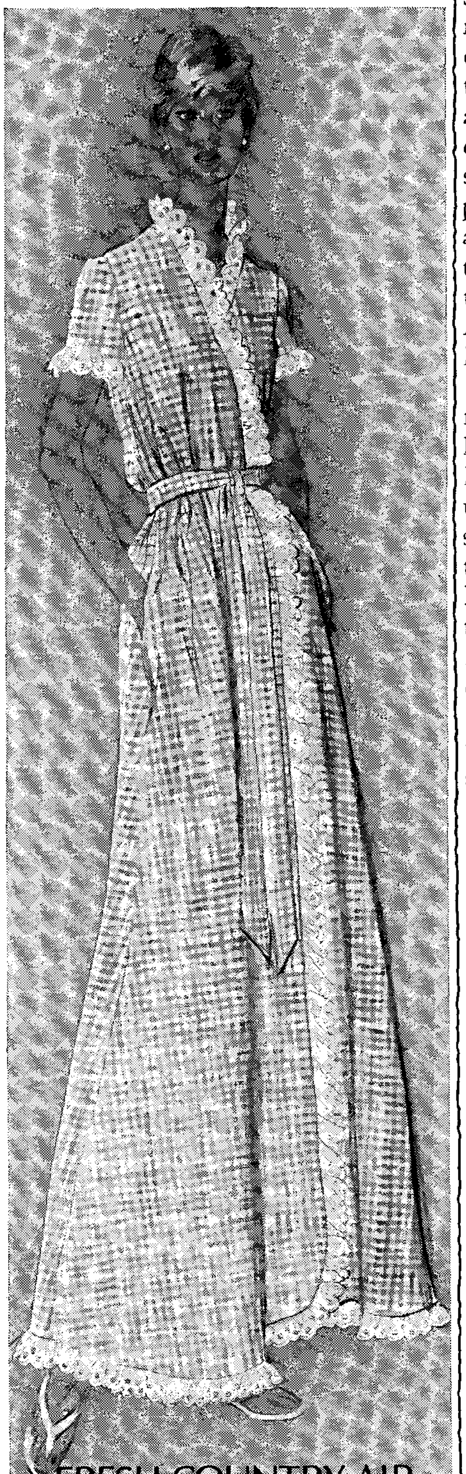
FOURTH INTERLUDE: 1:45 P.M. on November 11, 1976. Luncheon with Sir Ralph at the Algonquin Hotel. He arrives late, bustling through the crowded restaurant, mustache bristling, eyes moist with apology. We talk first about the honorary D. Litt. he received from Oxford University in 1969. It was bestowed by Harold Macmillan, the Chancellor of the University and former Prime Minister, who delivered a Latin oration. "What he said, in essence, was that the gods have been graceful and lucky for you, and that we of this university wish to add to their smiling," Sir Ralph says. When we have ordered, I ask Sir Ralph whom he would invite to an ideal dinner party, given free choice from the living and the dead. His list, like a good deal more about him, is highly idiosyncratic. "Samuel Butler, demolisher of Victorian fathers. Robert Louis Stevenson. Joseph Conrad, provided that he admired Shakespeare. Scott of the Antarctic. And another explorer, Shackleton, to whom I'm distantly related. Einstein, definitely. And, above all, David Lloyd George, that rascally fellow-actor, that bandit, that savior of our country, without whom Kaiser Bill might even now be walking through Buckingham Palace waxing his mustache." Sir Ralph eats for a while in silence, apparently—and to my great relief—with pleasure. "I've just been reading some of Freud's lectures. Amazing how these tiny little childhood things can have repercussions like the atomic bomb. I wouldn't mind having him at our dinner table. He had such a great sense of humor." Another pause for eating. "I've always been intrigued by his picture of life—the sex down there, the caretaker up here. But I wouldn't put sex ace high, No. 1, the thing that winds up the whole clock. I think murder is more basic. Before you get the woman, you must kill the man who possesses her. Hunger is the first impulse of all. But then I must *possess* something. And then I must *enjoy* something. And that may involve destroying somebody else. For reasons of policy and politeness, of course, we put the brakes on."



It is getting late, and the room has emptied. The waiters are laying tables for dinner. For a moment, Sir Ralph watches them. Then he says, "I wouldn't mind running through this restaurant and smashing all those glasses. I see them glittering there." A pause. "One is putting the brakes on all the time." While we wait for the check, his mind reverts to "No Man's Land": "Hirst is capable of murder, you know. I believe he was responsible for the drowning of a girl in a lake, although Mr. Pinter might not necessarily agree. He is certainly capable of killing Spooner. We all have original sin. Hirst has it. *I* have it." Sir Ralph's eyes are blazing. As I escort the former altar boy (for such he was in his Papist youth) to his limousine, he says, "I would much rather be able to terrify than to charm. I like malevolence. What an enjoyable lunch."

•

IN September, 1975, Sir Ralph went on London Weekend Television and gave a sixty-minute interview by which (his finest stage performances apart) I would not mind remembering him. He was freewheeling and free-associating, seeming artless in his candor, yet laying artful diversionary smokescreens whenever anything central to his privacy appeared to be threatened. We were watching a master mesmerist. No great lover of publicity for its own sake, he had undertaken this chore at the behest of the



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National Theatre, by whom he was currently employed. His interlocutor was Russell Harty, a dapper North Countryman, who runs the most popular chat show on the British commercial channel. The setting was the usual studio mockup—in this case, a semicircular arrangement of window draperies with nothing behind it, and a low window seat and a pair of tulip-shaped chairs (one of them occupied by Harty) in front of it. A packed house applauded as Harty urged it to welcome "one of the most distinguished actors in the British theatre."

Sir Ralph enters around one side of the draperies, wearing a tweed suit, a pink satin tie, and bright-yellow socks. Instead of taking his expected place in the empty chair, he walks straight past it (and Harty) toward the audience, before whom he halts, bounteously beaming. He seems in a genial frame of mind. Cameras whirl round to keep him in shot, none too successfully.

SIR RALPH (*to Harty, over his shoulder*): You've got a very nice place here, haven't you? It's a great deal bigger than my place, where you came to see me the other day.

HARTY (*left high and dry, but keeping his cool*): Yes, but it's not as posh as yours.

SIR RALPH: No, but you've got a lot more friends than I have.

In his voice we note a false bonhomie, as of a Dr. Watson—played, of course, by Nigel Bruce—behind whose slightly fatuous façade a canny, Holmeslike intelligence is at work.

SIR RALPH: Are they friends of yours? Or are they enemies?

HARTY: Well, we don't know.

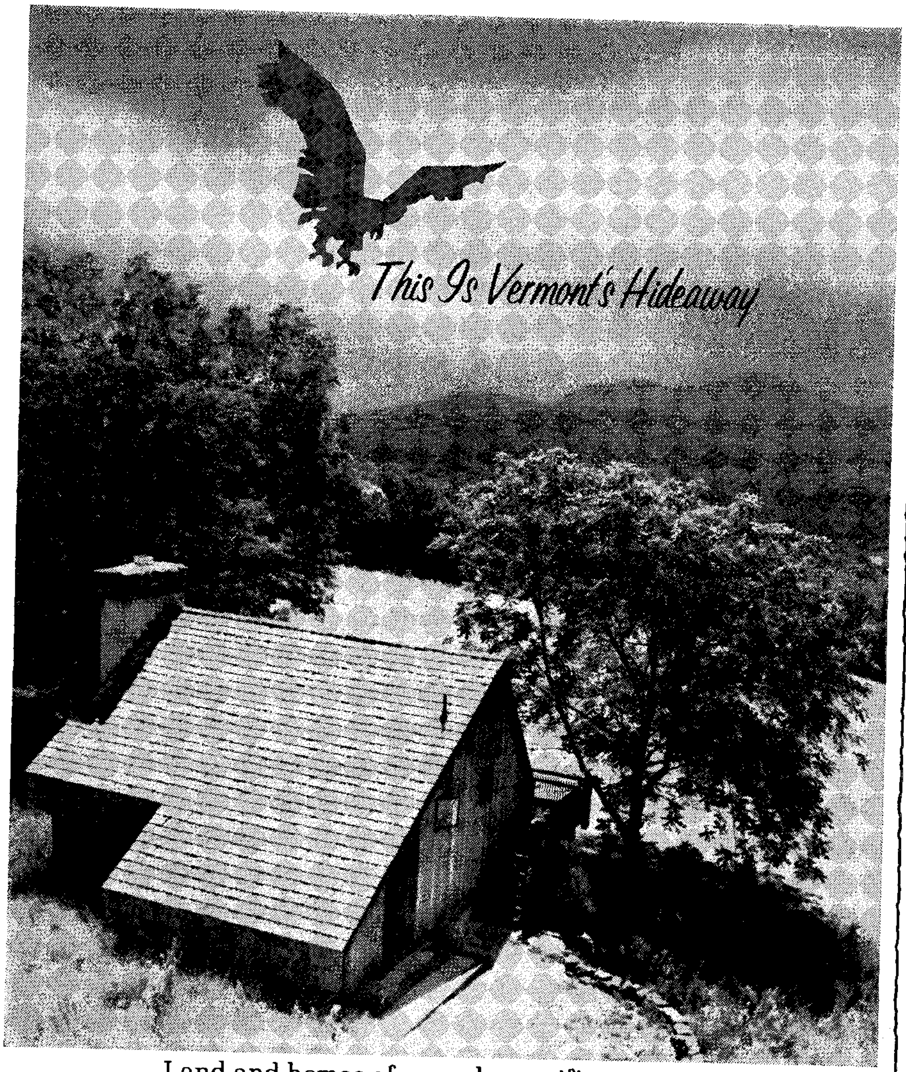
SIR RALPH: Shall I address them? Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I assure you that this man Harty is innocent.

Who said he was guilty? Already Sir Ralph has taken control.

SIR RALPH: You've got a lot more cameras in your place than I've got in mine. Cameras always make me rather nervous. They sort of prowl in on you. Of course, you know them. You probably feed them. What do they eat? Celluloid and chips?

Thus far, he has been strolling around inspecting the technology. He now wanders past Harty, still glued to his tulip, toward the window seat. On this he sits, and he peeps eagerly through the draperies at what we know perfectly well is the wall of the studio.

SIR RALPH: I say, what a wonderful view you've got here! I mean, you could see anything from here, couldn't you—the Tower of London, Buckingham Pal-



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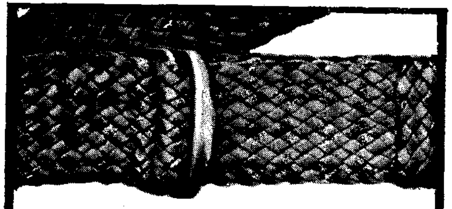

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ace, the Post Office Tower? I'll bet you could.

Consenting at last to occupy a chair, Sir Ralph immediately begins to interview Harty, asking him about his past career and whether his parents have secure and pensionable jobs. Some time passes before Harty manages to sneak in a question about the Pinter play.

SIR RALPH: There isn't any plot. But that never bothers an actor. And the characters are never really rounded off. They don't quite know who they are. But that's rather natural in a way. We don't know exactly who we are, do we? We hardly know anybody else, really completely. We none of us know when we're going to die. . . . We're a mystery to ourselves, and to other people.

He goes on to say that acting is never boring, because the audiences are always different.

SIR RALPH: In music, the punctuation is absolutely strict, the bars and the rests are absolutely defined. But our punctuation cannot be quite strict, because we have to relate it to the audience. In other words, we are continually changing the score. . . . For me, what gives our work its special fascination is the challenge that has to do with time. If you're a writer or a painter, you write or paint whenever you want to. But we have to do this task at a precise moment. At three minutes past eight, the curtain goes up, and you've got to pretend to believe, because no one else will believe you unless you believe it yourself. A great deal of our work is simply making ourselves dream. That is the task. At three minutes past eight you must dream.

HARTY: Do you dream when you go to bed?

SIR RALPH: Yes, I dream a lot. I lead a fairly sheltered life. Things are fairly peaceful, and nobody tries to murder me much. . . . Fortunately, I am able to remember my nightmares. They help me in my work. When I'm asleep, I'm earning my living if I have a nightmare. I get murdered a good deal. I get stabbed quite a bit.

Harty suggests that Sir Ralph doesn't much like his own body. Conceding the point, Sir Ralph proposes that they might swap. Perhaps feeling cornered, he fires a sudden question at Harty: "Do you hate your face?" Commendably unfazed, Harty replies that he hates not only his face but his name and his body from the waist down. "Oh, really?" says Sir Ralph. "I can't see anything the matter with it." Harty now tries yet again to seize the initiative.

HARTY: I wondered whether you'd gone into acting because you weren't satisfied with your face or your body.

SIR RALPH (*not to be drawn*): There are lots of reasons why people become actors. Some to hide themselves, and

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some to show themselves. As for my face, I've seen better-looking hot cross buns.

Before long, Sir Ralph, back in the driver's seat, is asking Harty what kind of people he finds it easiest to talk to. Having given a long and honest answer, Harty reverses the question.

SIR RALPH: I like talking to engineers best. They build bridges, they're very precise, they're very disciplined, yet I find they have roving minds. They can talk about anything. My other favorite people are explorers and potholers. To *choose* to be brave is a great sign of character, I think. They have great accuracy, and also great fantasy.

Harty shows a clip from Sir Ralph's latest film, "Rollerball," and afterward points out to the viewers that throughout the excerpt Sir Ralph busied himself with lighting his pipe and carefully averted his eyes from the screen. Emitting clouds of smoke, Sir Ralph resumes the questioning. Does Russell Harty like his own name? Harty says that he doesn't. Sir Ralph hastens to reassure him.

SIR RALPH: I think Russell Harty is a jolly decent name.... I'm very fond of Russell because half my family are Russells. My mother was a Russell, so I'm very used to the name. And I don't mind Richardson. I think it suits me, because it's rather plain.

Here he drifts off into free association, before the eyes of approximately twelve million viewers.

SIR RALPH: How weird it is, the way people's names seem to suit them—how they get a name and grow up to be like it:... Shakespeare, for instance—it's an arresting, an aggressive word. You can see the man.... And Velázquez—how the name suits the painter! It's a delicious sound; you can feel him laying on the paint, you could almost eat the paint itself. And Rembrandt—he's an old ruminative man, drawing old things with long memories.... But I tell you, I like the name Richardson, and I like the name Russell....

HARTY: Are you viewing the prospect of old age with regret or happiness?

SIR RALPH: I'm amazed that I'm as old as I am. I always had the idea that when I was old I'd get frightfully clever. I'd get awfully learned, I'd get jolly sage. People would come to me for advice. But nobody ever comes to me for anything, and I don't know a thing.

Later, as if it were a matter of trifling consequence, he remarks that he has "never been particularly afraid of dying." Finally, at Harty's gentle instigation, he goes to a lectern and brings their conversation to an end by reading Keats's "To Autumn," that being the season of the year.

As I watched, I remembered him, thirty years ago, as the dying Cyrano, sitting in a convent garden, with autumn leaves twirling and floating around him. Sir Ralph looked, even then, very odd, and absentminded, and solitary, and absurd, and noble, and desolate. When he spoke, he sounded at once defiant and merciful. There has always been in his voice a mixture of challenge and benison.

Like Gielgud, I wanted to see him again as Falstaff, a role of which W. H. Auden once wrote:

> Falstaff never really does anything, but... the impression he makes on the audience is not of idleness but of infinite energy. He is never tired, never bored, and until he is rejected he radiates happiness as Hal radiates power, and this happiness without apparent cause, this untiring devotion to making others laugh becomes a comic image for a love which is absolutely self-giving.

Very delicately, Auden goes on to suggest nothing less than that Falstaff is a comic symbol of Jesus Christ. When the Christian God presents himself on earth, "the consequence is inevitable," as Auden points out. "The highest religious and temporal authorities condemn Him as a blasphemer and a Lord of Misrule, as a Bad Companion for mankind." Which, of course, is what happened to Falstaff. Quite apart from its fun and its lunatic grandeur, there was a charity about Sir Ralph's performance, a magnanimity and a grief, that made you wonder whether Auden's audacious hint might not be the simple truth, after all.

In fact, to take a step further, if a playwright were to revive the anthropomorphic conception of the deity and write a play about God himself, and if he were then to ask my help in picking an actor for the central role, I know exactly in which direction I would point him. I would find it entirely credible that the creator of the universe as we know it was someone very like Sir Ralph. This does not mean either that I accept the Christian hypothesis or that I approve of the current state of the world; but if we imagine its maker as a whimsical, enigmatic magician, capable of fearful blunders, sometimes inexplicably ferocious, at other times dazzling in his innocence and benignity, we are going to need an actor who can imply metaphysical attributes while remaining—to quote C. S. Lewis on God—"a positive, concrete, and highly articulated character." Someone, in short, who is at once unapproachable and instantly accessible. Sir Ralph's number, as I have said, is in the book.

—KENNETH TYNAN

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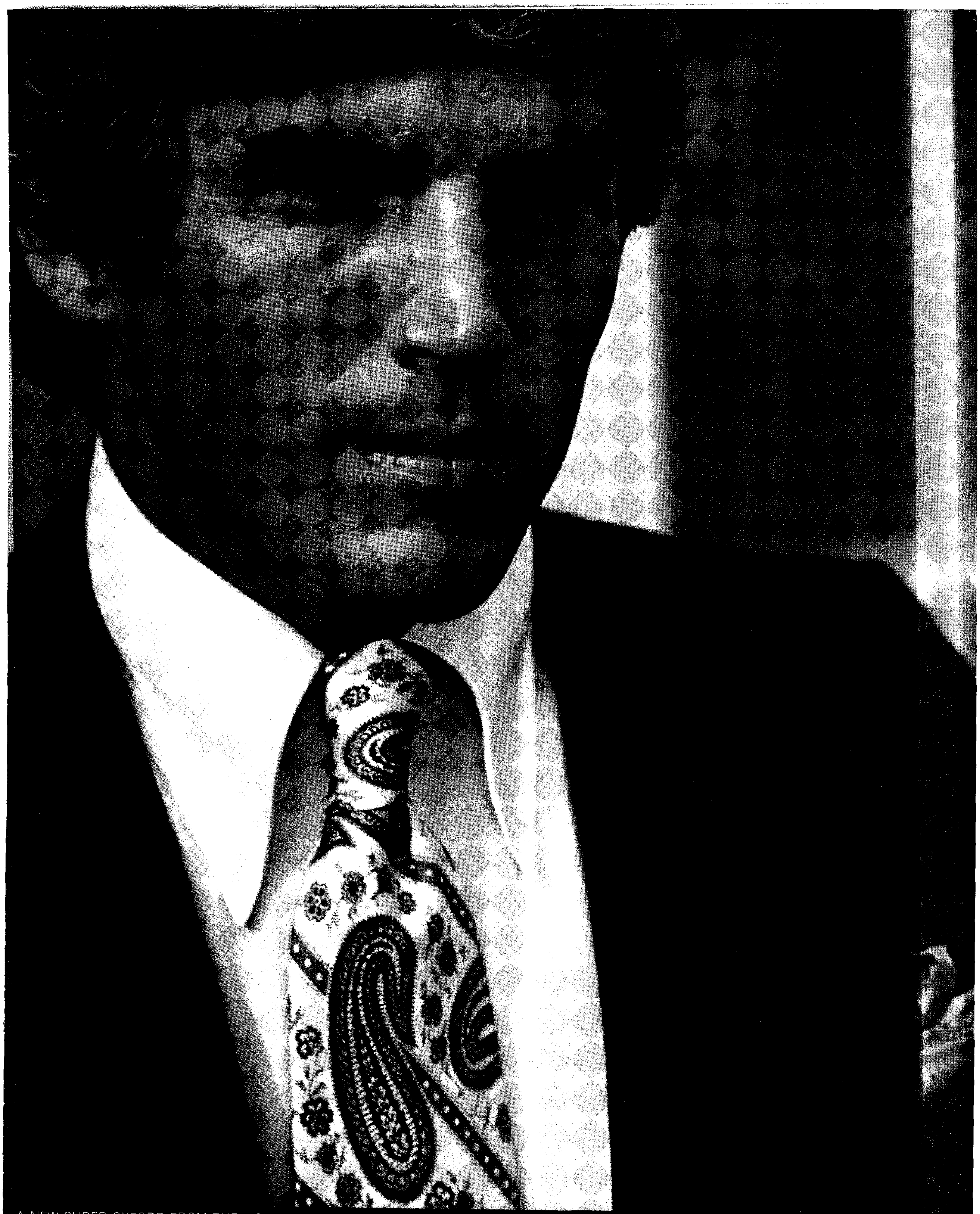

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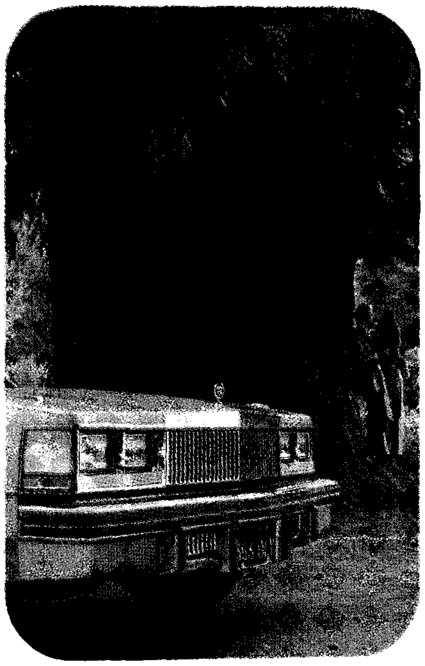

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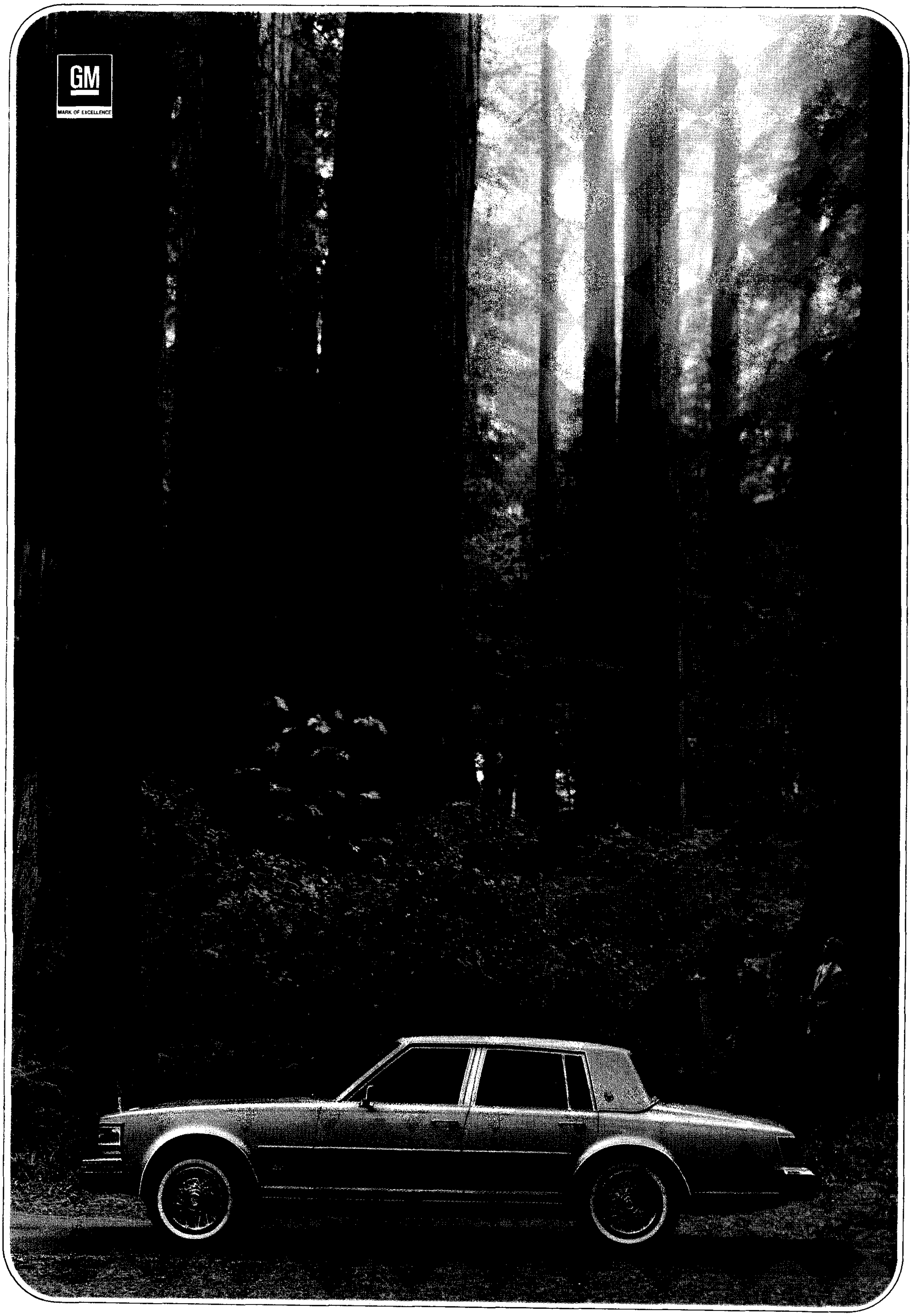
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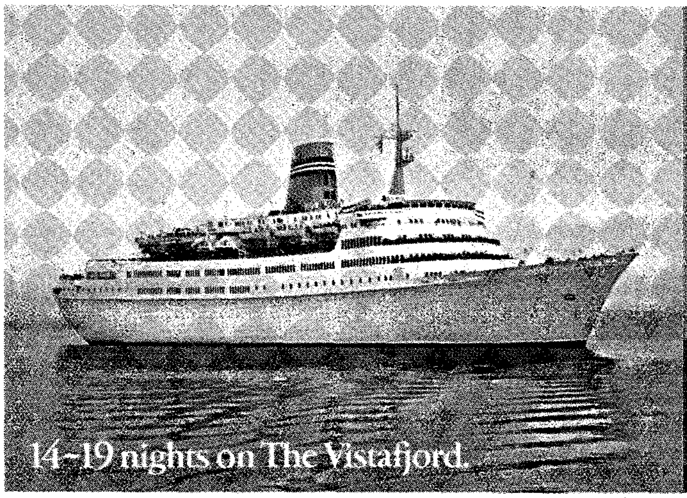

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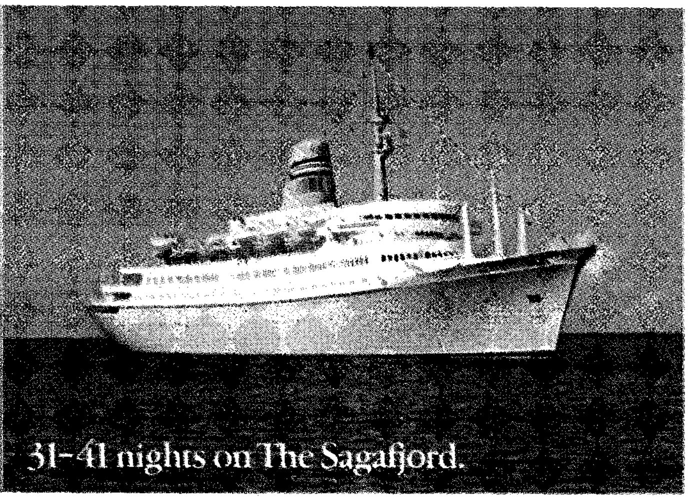

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THE THEATRE

HAPPY HOMECOMING

IN recent years, one has grown accustomed to thinking of Betty Comden and Adolph Green as writers of musical comedies rather than as performers, but the truth is that they have always been gifted and energetic followers of both callings. I recollect that back at the very end of the thirties they were writing and performing their own material ("material" is the odious trade term that would be applied to "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" if Shakespeare were still active in show biz) at the cellar night club on lower Seventh Avenue called the Village Vanguard. Whatever the Vanguard may be today, in that distant time it was a dimly lighted, gerrymander-shaped cave, with neither air-conditioning nor, at the start, a liquor license. One got the uneasy impression there of having ventured recklessly far below sea level; coelacanths had just then been discovered, and the squamous-walled old Vanguard, it seems in retrospect, would have provided a better habitat for them than the deeps of the Indian Ocean. Be that as it may, Comden, Green, and their close friend and associate Judy Holliday were so buoyant by nature and so clever in their routines that they quickly caused their audiences to forget time, place, and circumstance. With a couple of other performers, they billed themselves as the Revuers, and they turned out topical satires at the rate of a new show every few days—if not, indeed, every few minutes.

Topical? Yes, but what if I were to tell you that Comden and Green opened at the Morosco last week, and that snippets of their songs and patter out of the thirties were greeted by hearty laughter and applause not merely from their contemporaries but also from appreciative codgers in their teens and twenties? It appears that the show, accurately entitled "A Party with Betty Comden and Adolph Green," will be a smash hit; so much for George S. Kaufman's witty dictum about satire: "Satire is what closes Saturday night." Comden and Green's acute, affectionately bantering view of human frailty covers a period of four decades and manages to end up looking little the worse for wear. And no more do they; in their eager determination to win all hearts, they might be charming young folk at the very beginning of their careers. Henry James says somewhere that age is a reluctant march into the enemy country—the country of the general lost freshness. Comden and Green have never lost their freshness, and it is plainly their intention, growing older, never to grow old. I salute them with respect and envy.

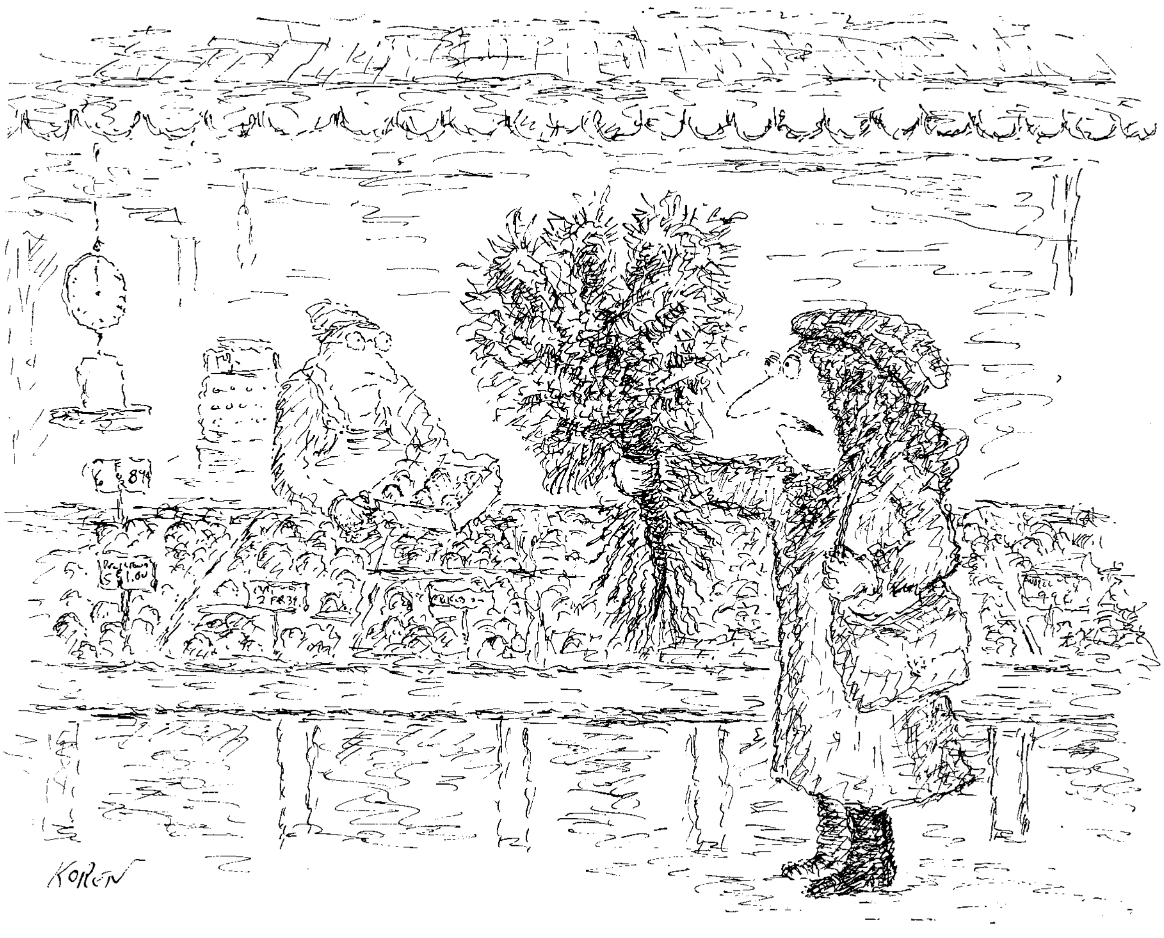
Throughout the party, which on opening night the zestful host and hostess gave every sign of being reluctant to bring to an end, they were accompanied at the piano by Paul Trueblood; among the composers whose songs he played—and for whom Comden and Green served as admirable lyricists—were Leonard Bernstein (their friend since his days at Harvard), Jule Styne, and Cy Coleman. The handsome Comden gowns were by Donald Brooks, and the production was described in the program as having been "executed" by John Fitzpatrick. The verb put me grimly in mind of the Tower of London; everything else being equal, surely it would be pleasanter to be directed than executed.

—BRENDAN GILL

OFF BROADWAY

Redivivus/Untimely Gone

DAVID RUDKIN'S "Ashes" has now reappeared at the Public, and seeing it for a second time, free of the burden of what-happens-next, made me realize that I barely did it justice in my review in December. The play now seems richer in every conceivable way than it did originally, and the perform-



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ances, by Roberta Maxwell, Brian Murray, John Tillinger, and Penelope Allen, under Lynne Meadow's direction, are as good as any in town, and better than most.

THE Promenade, at Seventy-sixth Street and Broadway—which is considered Off—last week housed (for one night only, as things unfortunately turned out) a harmless little musical confection called "The Castaways," with a tuneful, supple score by Don Pippin, nimble lyrics by Steve Brown, and clear, unaffected performances, always in keeping, under the capable direction of Tony Tanner. The time is 1845. The castaways of the title are a troupe of actors—members of Mordecai Noah's company—on a round-the-world tour, who must literally play for their lives aboard a ship that has been captured by Algerian pirates. If, the pirate first mate tells them, they can make the pirate captain laugh, they can go free. They try a few little stunts with no success, so they decide to present their production of "She Would Be a Soldier," as done at their own theatre, the Chestnut Street, in Philadelphia. There is much switching in and out of character as the show within the show proceeds, and, to compound the confusion, Mrs. Kendall, the leading lady of the company, is also, of course, the leading lady of the show within the show, in which she disguises herself as a man. And that's enough about the plot. It was the songs and the singing of them that made "The Castaways," from the beginning, when the actors entered one by one, singing the engaging "Exits and Entrances," right up to the reprise at the end. Kathleen Widdoes, as Mrs. Kendall—charm plus flashes of authority—sang as well as she did when she played Beatrice in the musical "Much Ado About Nothing," and her next-to-closing number, "This Dawn," was truly lovely. Wayne Sherwood, disguised as an Indian chief, sang the haunting "Call Back the Times" with strength and finesse, and "Dumplings"—a merry music-hall song riddled with double-entendres—made an entertaining number as done by Maureen Maloney. The actors I've mentioned were ably supported by Stephen James, Gibby Brand, and Rick Ladson, among others. Scenery, lighting, and costumes, all commendable, were by Scott Johnson, Richard Winkler, and Patricia McGourty.

STANISLAW IGNACY WITKIEWICZ'S "The Crazy Locomotive," a production of the Chelsea, which lately

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appeared at Theatre Four, is an allegory in surrealist style, compounded of all the cuteness and bogus significance and repulsiveness that these two pieces of information suggest. The action takes place in a locomotive that is speeding toward disaster with a pair of arch-criminals at the controls; it begins with credits projected on a scrim and, after the inevitable crash, it ends with movies of mangled bodies, some dead and others writhing in agony. There is a tendency in the theatre to consider any play that is abstract "experimental"—the more impersonal, the more daring. There are no people in "The Crazy Locomotive"—just comic-strip figures. I found it a pretentious bore, but I must also say that Douglas Schmidt's impressive, elaborate scenery of whirling wheels and pumping pistons and extremely agitated machinery, along with Pril Smiley's effective electronic music and orchestrations, almost made the evening worthwhile.

JACQUELINE BROOKS is an anguished, regal Jocasta in "King Oedipus," which will be running February 17th, 18th, and 19th at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, but James Earl Jones is not Oedipus—not for a minute—so the play simply doesn't exist. The translation, by John Lewin, sounded all right, even to one accustomed for a lifetime to hearing Sophocles filtered through Gilbert Murray.

—EDITH OLIVER

•

I've looked everywhere in this area for an instruction book on how to play the concertina without success. Mrs. F. M., Myrtle Beach, S.C.—*Charlotte (N.C.) Observer.*

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CHANTS WE DOUBT EVER GOT CHANTED

[*From the Washington Post*]

Referring to former President Peron's former close adviser and social welfare minister, Jose Lopez Rega, the soccer crowd chanted: "With Isabel and *El Brujo* (the sorcerer), we used to live *de lujo* (in luxury)."

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THE SPORTING SCENE

HEAVY GOING

MOST of my life, I have been in thrall to sport in a variety of forms—to what I realize is a strong and separate layer of human activity, with its own history, its own time scale, its own laws, its own ethos. My involvement is a heavy one, for almost nobody gets away with just liking to play a game, occasionally, on whim. A whole disposition follows, a kind of addiction of the attention, and its implications have lately been giving me pause. An interest in sports may begin in enthusiasm, but it is likely to end in obsession—obsession that lasts much longer than the elasticity of the muscles or the enthusiasms of boyhood. Sportsmen live from game to game rather than from day to day, and for them the changing seasons are a matter of moving from one sport to another. One year's fixtures come round again next year. Only the results change. But the contests are never a matter of life and death; on the contrary, they are vaguely expected to repeat themselves annually, into a kind of sporting infinity. Jorge Luis Borges, in one of his best stories, "The Lottery of Babylon," projects a situation in which the people of his reconstructed Babylon, bored with the rational equanimity of their society, introduce, for the sake of diversion, a public lottery, repudiating their reality and replacing it with an arbitrary, constructed system of chance and thrill. The lottery gradually obsesses them, and drives them to add the possibility of losing and being penalized to that of winning, as an extra excitement. Borges clearly had Argentina and its national lottery in mind, but for me the story has certain inescapable sporting implications. As Borges' Babylon rejected the actual world for an invented one, so do we keep pulling sporting situations and events over our heads, and thriving on their expectations and satisfactions, which keep us fizzing from week to week, whatever else may be lumbering on in the real world.

"Winchner, you know damn well that when I said 'Let the chips fall where they may' I didn't mean on me!"

•

NOT long ago on a cold, mole-gray afternoon in Edinburgh, well laced with pointed rain, I found myself standing on a stadium terrace watching a soccer game between two teams whose names were entwined in my childhood but whose performance that day looked thuggish and inept, considerably less entertaining than the spontaneous schoolboy games I oversee in the park from my window. I suddenly took stock, and asked myself, with a measure of incredulity, "What *are* you doing here?"—for I was able to think, on the spot, of at least seven things I could have been doing with more pleasure. It was a realization I must have repressed ruthlessly until that moment; but I left abruptly, and, looking back, I think I was leaving behind more than just that game.

•

I WAS initiated early, perched on my father's shoulders on a cold Saturday afternoon in Scotland, watching the bruising, grunting entanglement of a rugby scrum giving off exhausted breath in clouds and going nowhere. I could not understand the point of it, of course, but it was obviously of such passionate importance to the roaring men around me and the dying men on the field that it lodged itself indelibly in my head. I had never seen grown men behave like that before, and I felt I was being admitted to some secret rite—and, I suppose, I was. When my fellow-initiates and I began to play our own games, we never bothered about understanding the point or the rules; in fact, we hardly bothered about the ball, except as a prop. Instead, we put on elaborate mimes, in which we reënacted movements and gestures we had watched, down to the very grunts. I notice the same thing in public parks today, where undersized boys who have not yet learned to play show themselves to be already masters of all the theatricality of sport.

•

I HAD no idea then that I was entering a kind of tunnel; nor could I have guessed where it would lead. I have read more than my share of memoirs in which sensitive, game-hating schoolboys suffered at the hands of brutish, muscle-minded sports masters for their incompetence on the playing field; but for my own part I looked on games at school as pure liberation. Once out to grass, we were beyond the jurisdiction of teachers, independent of them, performers rather than apprentices. *We* were playing the game; teachers were excluded by their size. Nor did it occur to us that playing games had anything to do with forming our characters, although we quickly realized that playing them well would get us free time, attention, scholastic office, perhaps, and a certain official indulgence. What I remember most, however—what mattered most—was the pure physical pleasure of the game, whichever game it was: the endless moment when the ball would seem to stay at the top of its arc, suspended, before it began to fall back earthward, into the panting scramble below. Such moments were epiphanies. I was always playing something, and I did not particularly care which game it was—field hockey on the frozen ground, soccer or rugby in rain, mud, snow, or sun, cricket on grass-stained summer afternoons, tennis or track tucked into green evenings. I would have played anything at all if there had been more time, for I took to games well and easily, finding them always pleasurable, conclusive, satisfying. I suppose that the sporting ethos was embedding itself in me all the time, not through any sports master's impulse to instruct or inspire but because the games themselves had built-in rules and attitudes. The games were finite and plentiful, and kept us from ever being bored or having to think beyond them. They kept us, in fact, from a great deal more; but they remained a separate world, in which we had some control, and they had the virtue of never repeating themselves.

•

SCHOOLS contrive to make sporting activities as accessible as lunches, and while we feasted we were also acquiring heroes and preparing ourselves to be the fans of tomorrow and the tweed-capped soothsayers of fifty years on, for it became obligatory to read about—and watch, when possible—the muscular stars of the day, to see if we could add any new twist to our performances or extra mannerisms to our play. In those years, we knew our sporting statistics before we knew what statistics were, and would go on sporting pilgrimages with all the fervor of the faithful. When Scotland played a rugby match against England, Wales, or

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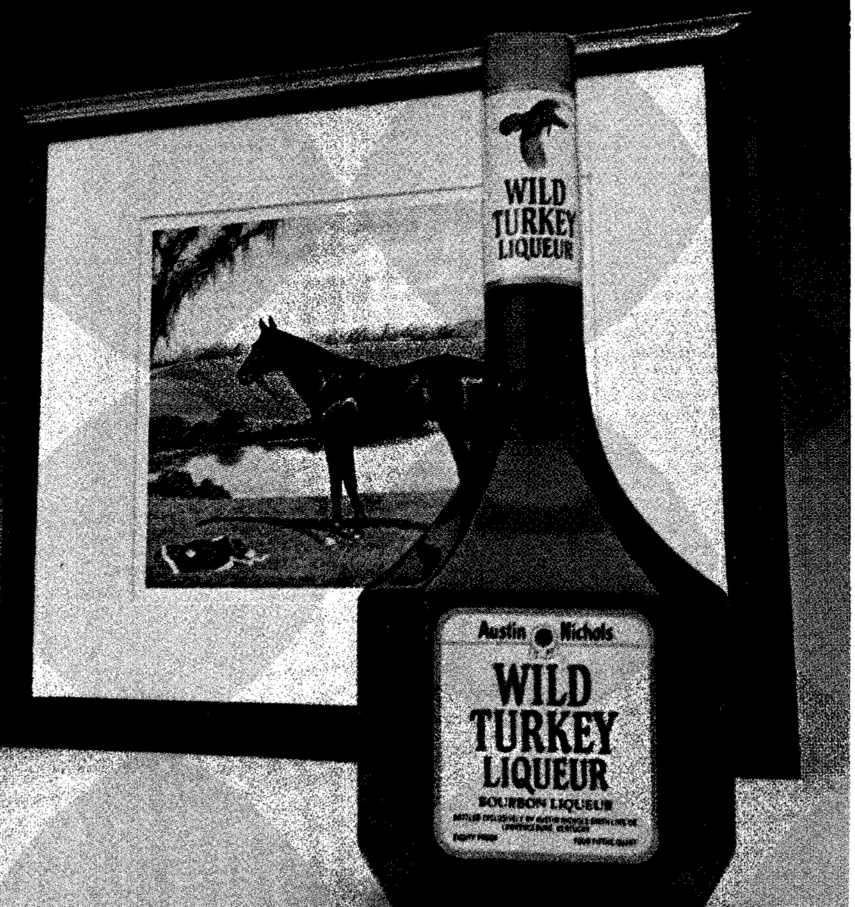

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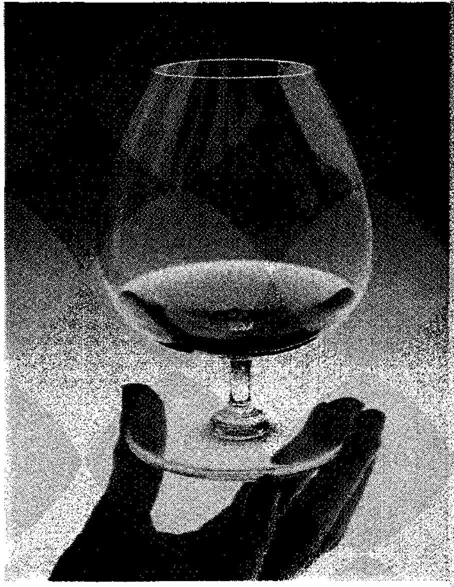

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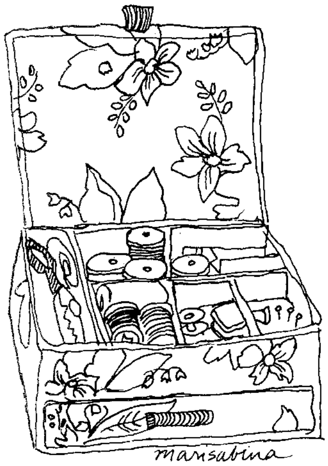
Ireland at its voluminous home ground in Edinburgh, we would be the first to arrive and the last to leave, wound up in scarves, hoarse, clutching programs for our private annals, with their photographs of burly, bearded teams from the past, looking to us as remote in time as Crusaders. We would marvel at the cleansing effect of passing time. In Britain, a sharp distinction exists between rugby and soccer, the two principal winter games. Rugby has traditionally been the elected game of the "character-building" public schools and the universities, and has remained staunchly amateur, whereas soccer, referred to invariably as "the working-man's game," went professional early and has always commanded a huge and pugnacious following in the cities and the industrial areas. But that is a simplification, for in certain regions—the mining country of South Wales, and the Scottish Border country—rugby provokes a religious fervor, and soccer is looked on as effete by comparison. There is always a hint of class war between the two codes; but in recent years soccer has come in for—and deserved—much more attention, for it is *the* universal team game. In those early days, however, we felt no contradiction, and played both, with equal zest. Through the agency of an indulgent uncle, I would get myself taken to soccer games, changing my language and terms of reference like a bilingual, collecting different programs, adding to a different vocabulary. And when the turning seasons brought a different game round, I was ready. The world seemed to be peopled by nothing more than clusters of teams—a huge sporting pyramid on some lower step of which we had a hot foothold. Games began and ended; but the Game, we felt, would go on and on.

•

I DOUBT whether any part of the world has a sporting appetite to match in its wide voracity that of the British Isles. Greater passions, certainly—I have rubbed shoulders with crowds in Spain and South America which were baying for blood, usually referee's blood—but nowhere will so many people turn out so often and so ritually to watch and play so many bizarre games in such appalling conditions, or give so much of their waking attention to sport, as they do, week in, week out, in these islands. For one thing, the main sports—rugby, soccer, cricket, golf, tennis, rowing, horse racing—have long histories by now, and so are not simply activities but part of a continuing tradition, as stable and as durable as anything else in the society. Football and cricket were flourishing in the seventeenth century, and after Charles II was restored to the throne in 1660, one of his contributions to the general jollity of his restoration was to lay down the rules for bowls, an extremely popular gambling game of the period. But it was in the last third of the nineteenth century that games began to be organized as regular, recurring contests rather than as occasional diversions. The appetite of the public developed accordingly: the continuity of games from season to season made them something to follow, and today a huge public exists, plentifully stuffed with sporting lore. (Lately, one television program has even been holding a competition to discover the worst school soccer team in the country.) Games by now have long and hallowed pasts. The Irish, English, and Scottish Rugby Unions have already celebrated their centenaries, and their crowded annals imitate actual history, with legendary heroes and celebrated confrontations. When one dwells on the fact that a game like rugby has claimed a hundred and fifty years of dedicated amateur service from generations of serious, stouthearted men, one realizes that the game is to many an alternate reality, a kind of muscular fantasy that might claim some affinity with "The Lord of the Rings," Borges, or "Peter Pan." These centenaries point up the importance of the British—particularly the English—contribution to sport in the nineteenth century, for it was then that a great many games were meticulously codified and provided with near-infallible sets of rules that read as though they were the work of a rather severe but fair-minded governess. The rules meant that the games could be transmitted—laws, ethos, and all—to the many countries then touched by the British presence and influence. Now, though the Empire no longer exists politically, it can be seen to exist still in a sporting sense.



Take cricket, that most improbable of games. While the game of soccer might have been invented spontaneously by any bunch of players with a ball, cricket is obviously the tortuous result of a complex evolution (perhaps from the older game of club-ball), and only total immersion on the part of player or spectator can take it in in all its subtlety. Yet it is firmly embedded in the lives of Australians, New Zealanders, South Africans, Indians, Pakistanis, and West Indians, a few of whose countries have thoroughly outplayed the mother country in recent years, rather in the manner of a child beating its nanny at brag. Cricket carries in it a blandly concealed ethic—it is the most characteristically English of all games, with its bizarre formality and its gentlemanly pace—and it would seem unlikely that disparate temperaments like the Australian and the West Indian could swallow it, bats, bails, and wickets, as they have. A cricket match is an all-consuming rite; and since English county-championship games last for three days, and international test matches for five, cricket keeps the real world at bay with more prolonged success than any other sport. In the sporting context, England has been nanny to the world, bringing it up to play proper English games in a remarkably orderly manner, and yet leaving room for national quirks to be grafted onto the fairly Spartan fundamentals. While teams from countless countries troop regularly through the British Isles—a Japanese rugby team turned up three years ago, amid a certain disbelief—the English, the Irish, the Scots, and the Welsh never stop playing one another, every year, at just about every game in the lexicon, but with a lot more intensity and to a lot more public attention nowadays than when the first national teams faced one another in their long shorts and bunion boots, mustachioed and dedicated. Unlike most of the European countries, which sensibly stage their main sporting events on Sundays, Britain sticks doggedly to Saturday afternoons. (In 1974, while the country was reduced to a three-day work week, a number of football games shifted to Sunday—successfully, for attendances rose. A change seemed conceivable, but the powerful shadow of the Lord's Day Observance Society loomed awkwardly enough to send the players scuttling back to Saturday when the crisis passed.) In Britain, private recreation and sporting events are kept quite separate, Sundays being saved for the first and Saturday afternoons for the second. Saturday afternoons on the

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streets have an odd air to them: shoppers look furtive, time feels limp, and the two major television channels put out rival programs consisting of five solid hours of continuous sport, weekly anthologies of events not only on the home grounds but all over the planet. One year, as I settled down to watch the English Challenge Cup Final, an annual soccer milestone, the commentator informed me that I was one of three hundred million people tuned in to the match. The play itself was so mild and unadventurous that I imagined millions of viewers yawning in chorus. Three hundred million people being bored simultaneously is some sort of record. But I bet they all watched to the dreary end, as I did.

•

THE majority of people, I suppose, hang up their sports gear with their school days—all except the conspicuous few who skim a living from being watched or who can overcome the inconvenience of keeping their muscles stretched while pursuing another, unsporting life. For the rest, a gradual subsiding moves them from field to terrace, from active to passive. Playing a game brings about moments of zest, of sheer physical pleasure; but these occur to the spectator vicariously, through intense physical empathy. It is almost an inevitable progression—from player to spectator to addict. I am always surprised at how suddenly ex-players turn into sages, as though to become a spectator were the beginning of wisdom. Myself, I still jump at the chance to kick a ball about in any open space, for I have no doubt at all that playing a game is more absorbing in every way than watching one, no matter how miscellaneous the participants or how atrophied the muscles. I have even staged elaborate games of home soccer in the corridors of houses in the middle of cities—games that brought the house down, and that eventually grew elaborate rules. But the spectator must wait for games to happen, and is tied to the time scheme of his vicarious reality—first, a few days of expectation, of calculation, of reading omens, days of scrutinizing the sporting press and watching glimpses of previous games on television, all leading up to Saturday, when the crowds gather, hoping for their expectations to be surpassed, hoping for astonishment, but settling, generally, for a good deal less. Then come the post mortems, the appraisals, as the game shifts from expectation to memory and is tucked away in the record books. The real world is never so re-

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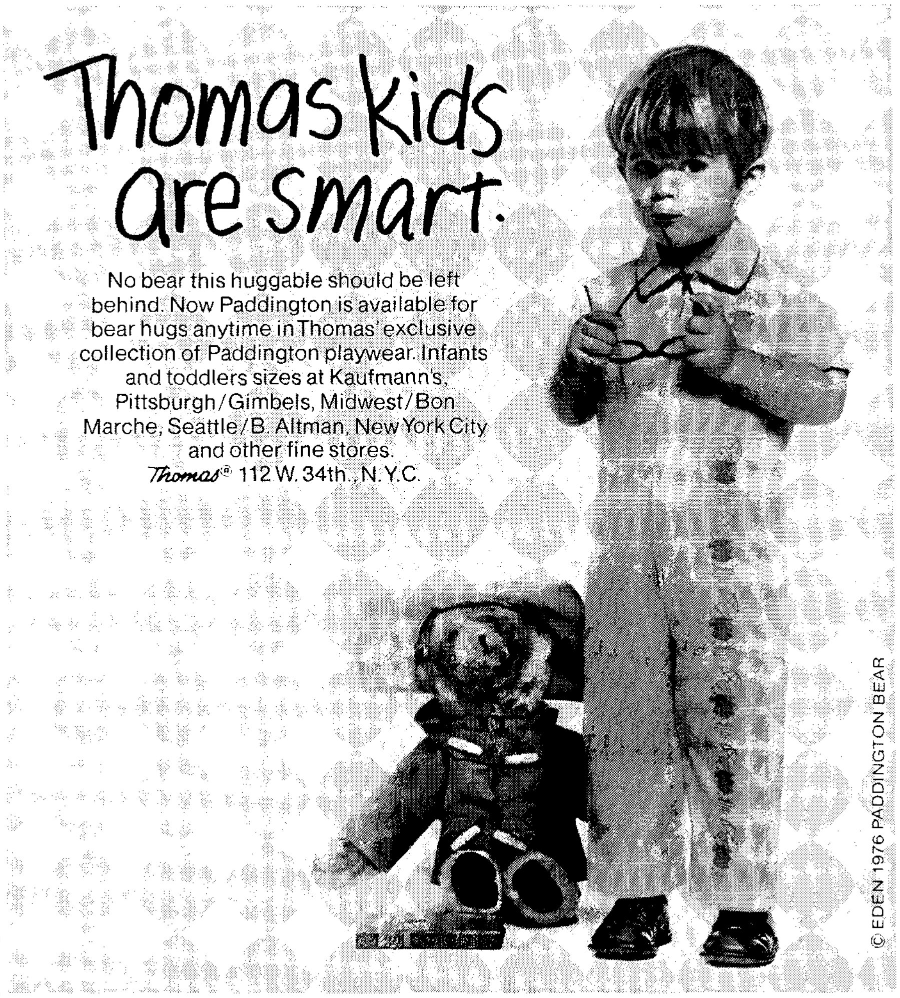
liable. Still, the world of sport keeps offering a steady stream of small unknowns, all to be resolved from week to week. There is enough surprise to keep it interesting, and there is, above all, the satisfaction of a conclusion.

•

AS a spectator, I have a long and ubiquitous dedication to games, for I have travelled a lot and shifted countries impulsively, taking whatever sports I have found. I have entered in part into the lives of new places through the sports pages, for they are remarkably alike from one country to another, even in the banality of their sporting metaphors. But the games on show do alter from place to place. Cricket does not raise its languid, well-mannered head in Europe, except in a few unlikely outposts: I once watched on a dusty expanse of ground in the town of Corfu the local Byron Cricket Club play a team from a visiting British frigate—a game unmemorable in every respect but that of its improbable atmosphere. Other countries offer some forms of sport unique to them, which have been handed down carefully from the past. Once, while I was living in the French Basque provinces, I gravitated, with everyone else, on a Saturday in late August to the town of Mauléon-Soule, where the annual Basque Games were being held. It was quite the most cheerful sporting occasion I can remember, helped along by the curious nature of the events. There was a relay race in which the contestants had to run carrying a squirming and squealing piglet to hand on to the next man, and a contest in which the axe-swinging contestants straddled enormous logs and had to chop them in half between their feet. I remember the whole occasion for the great glee shared by spectators and contestants—all the more so now, when sport appears to have lost all trace of humor, if not of pleasure.

•

I HAVE never felt that in the United States there is the same total immersion on the part of sports fans as in other countries—they are more critics than followers. In Europe or South America, crucial games so dominate the public attention as to affect everybody; but only on extreme occasions like the World Series does anything like that universal goggling occur in the United States. It may be because sport is more specialized, or it may be because the United States does not lock horns with other countries as frequent-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ly as do the European national teams. Perhaps this sporting isolation comes about because the United States sticks to its domestic sports, and has not yet evolved a sport like, say, soccer to a point where the country might qualify for the finals of the World Cup, the most cataclysmic and widely followed sporting event of all. It does enter the qualifying stages, playing against the Caribbean and Central American countries and Canada, but without much success so far. I attended the World Cup finals in Mexico in 1970 and, watching a quarter-final game between Italy and Mexico, I heard the announcer say, on my neighbor's transistor, in his most withering tones, "Italy should certainly have scored by now against such feeble opposition as Mexico, who only reached this stage at the expense of such inconsequential countries as Nicaragua and the United States of America." He must have relished the rare opportunity of uttering that sentence.

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IF the British Isles take the cake for the multiplicity of their sporting enthusiasms, Brazil must carry it off for single-mindedness, because in Brazil the national existence is dominated by soccer. Small boys perform prodigious feats with soccer balls in the back streets, and you get the impression that play never stops for a moment. The great heroes of the game, like Pelé, have racked up both fame and fortune from their playing days, in the manner of movie stars, so the small boys keep performing, hoping to be noticed by a stray scout, sure that they, too, can play their way to an otherwise unattainable stardom, and buy houses and cars for their families. The Brazilian soccer crowds are intimidating, so thirsty are they for superhuman performance, so intensely lettered in every twist of the game. But by far the most memorable sporting occasion I witnessed there took place on a damp, deserted Sunday morning in Rio de Janeiro. I went for a walk on the long beach, fairly early, in a light drizzle, with nothing in mind but the morning. On the sand, which through the week belonged to indolent sunbathers and peripatetic kite-fliers, goalposts had taken root, pair after pair, and a string of soccer games was in progress, receding into the far, drizzling distance. Small clumps of watchers stood under colored umbrellas or wandered from game to game, but nobody paid any attention to them—the games were the thing. The players were barefoot, the sand made for heavy going, but the fierce concentration, the inventiveness, and the physical exuberance of the players produced the kind of delighted pleasure that is the real lure of games—the moments of astonishment when players become part of an action that surprises even them. No shouts or whistles, no playing to the crowd, no histrionics, nothing but the game itself. I don't think I have ever seen anywhere else a game played so purely and joyfully for its own sake; and, as far as I was concerned, neither the players nor the teams had names, nor was I likely to watch any of them again. I often think of that morning as an antidote to the puffed-up, overheralded contests that fill the dreary seasons of overorganized sport. I hope the sand games go on and have not been turned into a spectacle.

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THE British take sport as something of a national duty; for Spaniards it is pleasure and the excuse for pleasure. They will watch anything with the same delighted disposition, and, equipped with family and friends, they come to sporting occasions in high good humor. I grew used in Spain to seeing babies at bullfights and late-night soccer games, and to being offered a share in the family feasts often unpacked at stadiums. Spaniards are the best-tempered spectators of all; they do not turn ugly, for their insistence on diversion is too great. I once calculated, while I was living in Madrid, that it was physically possible on a Sunday to begin with the illegal cockfights in the morning, take in the soccer match in the early afternoon, scamper to the bullfight, and follow that up with a few choice pelota matches at the fronton in the evening. Moreover, sporting occasions in Spain do not have the hearty maleness of those in the British Isles. Women attend with just as much enthusiasm as men, and the occasions are much better for their presence. I relished these Sundays in Madrid, days made for celebration—an exuberant change from the stark and barren Sundays I remembered from Scotland, days of absence and abstinence, where voices scarcely rose above a murmur and games were not played. By the happiest of accidents, I found myself living in the year 1959 at a short sprint from the ground of the

Spanish soccer team Real Madrid, then justly the most celebrated team in the world, and I made a habit of watching the players every time they filled their famous oval stadium. I had never seen the game of soccer played with such cool mastery, such panache and skill, and I could look forward to these games with schoolboy keenness, sure of seeing something pulled out of the hat. From the soccer point of view, it was like living at the center of the world. What was most curious in the Spain of those days was the huge switch in Spaniards' allegiance from the bullfight to soccer. Various scandals had discredited the bullfight across the years, even though it was still felt to be more ritual than sport. For a few seasons, I had the *afición*, as Spaniards say—the passion. But the more one learns of the intricacies of the bullfight, the more one becomes aware of the pretenses and deceptions practiced by matadors. In any case, tourists could then be counted on to fill the bullrings, for the sake of the experience. So even staunch Spanish aficionados were deserting the bullring in droves for the football stadium, angry at the tourist-pleasing travesties of the classic corrida. The controversy raged in the press and in the cafés, but I suspect that a great many Spaniards, for all their vehemence, kept on attending both, with their habitual delight.

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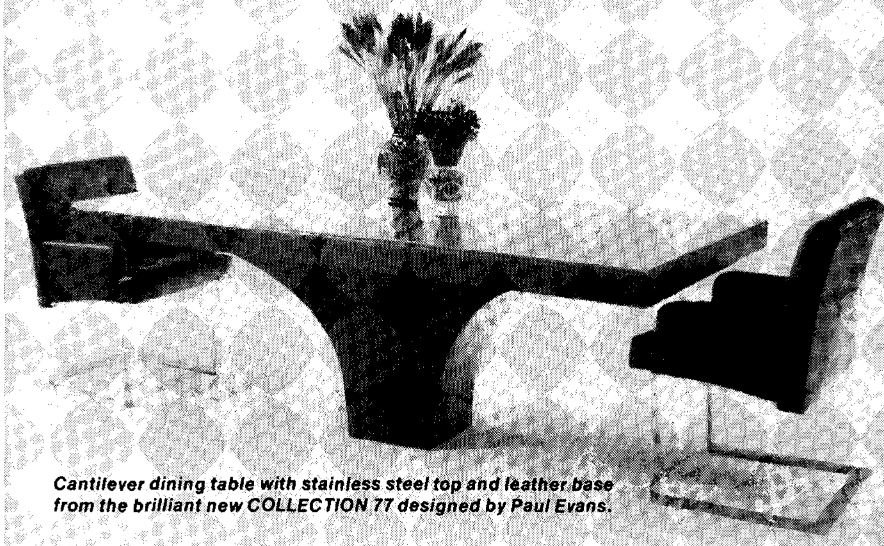
IN sport, time passes as it does in real life, but with a different rhythm. Players age and retire or are sold, and teams lose their touch. The last year I spent in Madrid, Real began to come apart, to lose to lesser teams, to look human. There was much headshaking, much clucking from the old men, much hissing and whistling from the terraces. With that amazing team, miracles had taken place as a matter of course; as it disintegrated, people grew either sad or angry at themselves. Chessmen do not age, after all, and the team had such perfection that it could not be forgiven its disintegration. I left in time to be spared the dying agonies; nor did I see its subsequent rebirth. It would have been unbearable to watch the team decline any further, to go through the stage where hope constantly outpaces performance, where memory keeps nudging one in the ribs, making mock of the present. Those years in Madrid were the only period since my schooldays in which I became a passionate fan, taking pleasure not only in the games but in the anticipation of them. It was a sporting experience that sets



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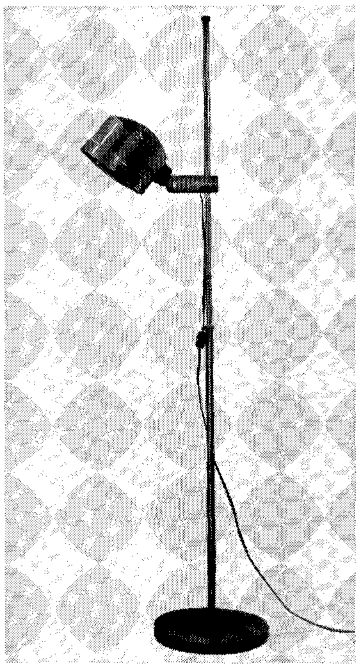

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PROBABLY the worst sporting summer I have ever spent was one in France, when I lived in an old water mill in the Pyrenees. Nothing at all showed up on the sports pages of the regional newspaper, the *Sud-Ouest*, save the impending Tour de France, the enormous bicycling cavalcade that keeps the French in a running lather throughout the month of July. Bicycles I love, as single objects, but bicycle racing, with its intricate team strategies and on such a scale, seemed altogether beyond my capacity for enthusiasm. Still, there was nothing else, and when I discovered that one of the *étapes* of the Tour was due to pass through a town some thirty kilometres away I could not resist going there. It proved to be the most disappointing event of my sporting life. I went there early in the day, took in my share of anticipatory atmospherics, settled myself in the makeshift stands well in advance—hours in advance—waited, read, dozed, talked with my neighbors, and was rewarded for all that laborious anticipation with some six minutes of hysterical whoosh as seventy-odd cyclists flashed past at a speed too fast for the eye to follow, bracketed by a tedious parade of publicity on wheels. I think it was the only time my spectating zeal deserted me entirely, for I gave up reading the newspapers after that, and never bothered to find out who won the whole gruelling pilgrimage.

•

THE transition from player to spectator is, I suppose, one that the passing of time makes inevitable, although I would still rather play anything, even if it has to be table tennis or croquet, than surrender totally to spectatorhood; nor do I want knowing *about* games to replace the games themselves. Of course, in our time television does our watching for us, and has reduced spectating to a state of passivity approaching mindlessness. British television covers sporting events as though they were moon shots, assembling panels of experts days before games are due to take place—a procedure that the TV people refer to as their buildup. Experts do our speculating for us—something that annoys me intensely—and their painful prognostications are interspersed with clips of games going back into sporting antiquity, possibly to give us a proper sense of the sporting past. I prefer the old men

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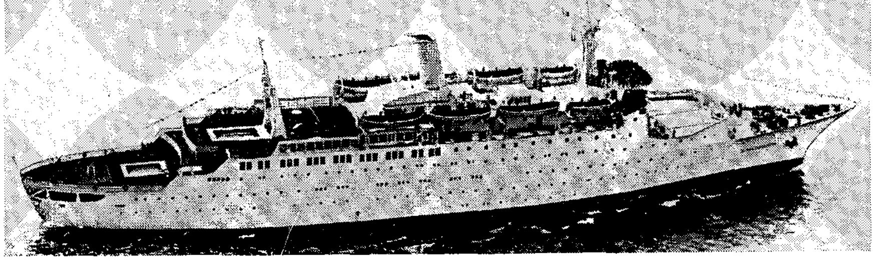

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in bars any day. (I recall during the buildup to the World Cup of 1974 a long translated interview with the aging parents of a member of Yugoslavia's national team—a masterpiece of irrelevance.) Players are questioned relentlessly and feebly: "How did you feel when you got the ball?" (How does anybody feel when he gets the ball? Busy, I guess, but hardly articulate.) Only very occasionally do sporting personalities turn out to be entertaining; and, besides, the jargon of most sports has stultified to a point where interviews turn out to be mainly an exchange of clichés. Predictions are conveniently forgotten by the time the long, analytical post mortems are under way, but the play itself is heavy with commentary, so that it has become impossible to watch for oneself, to watch without being told what one is seeing. Commentators have, or feel they have, an obligation to inject excitement into the proceedings, and tend to smother the action in exclamatory superlatives. But television has devised an even more ingenious way of tampering with perception, even with time itself, through the device of instant replay. No sooner has some crucial incident taken place than there it is, happening all over again, not once but several times—in slow motion, from a variety of angles; and if it should be a decisive goal we are bound to see it half a dozen times more during the post mortems. It may well go into the annals, to be replayed next year, next decade, whenever the same sporting occasion next takes place. Instant replay makes memory seem bumbling by comparison, yet memory is all we have and, I tend to feel, all we need to have, or ought to have. I look back to a time when games happened once and then passed happily into oblivion. Soon we will be crying out for instant replay as part of our everyday perception. Soon we may give up the hazard of slogging to stadiums altogether, and choose instead either to watch games from the sporting past played over and over or to see, possibly before long, others, specially put together for television—games that never really happen at all.

•

HAVE sports improved or declined with time? This question gets a voluminous going over from sportswriters and pundits, who mostly point out the great strides made and the enormous present-day public involvement. Yet when I cast my mind back, or when I see film clips of ancient encounters, it occurs to me that perhaps only the technology and the organization have evolved—the clips appear fast and jerky, the uniforms clumsy, the haircuts at odds with ours. The play itself is no less exuberant, however, nor are the crowds any less enthusiastic; and most of the old men I know sturdily insist that the players of the past were far more individually inventive than the overtrained robots of today. Certainly in my own past there were teams and occasions that thrilled me far more than anything in the present—but the argument is an impossible one. We have the same difficulty in, say, appreciating the beauty of women from yellowing photographs that we have in tuning in to the skill or excitement of faded, jerky rugby games. Rules have been streamlined somewhat, though surprisingly little. Records have been improved on, indisputably—but progress in sport has more to do with technological and physiological advance, and with fashion, than with anything else. Most probably, we all have a point in our lives at which sporting events involve and excite us to a degree that is never repeated, so that the games themselves appear to some to decline and to others to improve. Unquestionably, sports are now approached in such a ruthlessly systematic way that the heroes of the past seem no more than happy-go-lucky adventurers. I'm not sure I don't prefer them, in their flapping uniforms and huge boots, but, then, sports age in a way peculiar to themselves. It surprises me that we have stuck so closely to the canon of established sports, and have not invented a whole slew of new games, unencumbered by record books. It might help us to take the entire sporting effort less grimly, to get back to the principles of pleasure and play.

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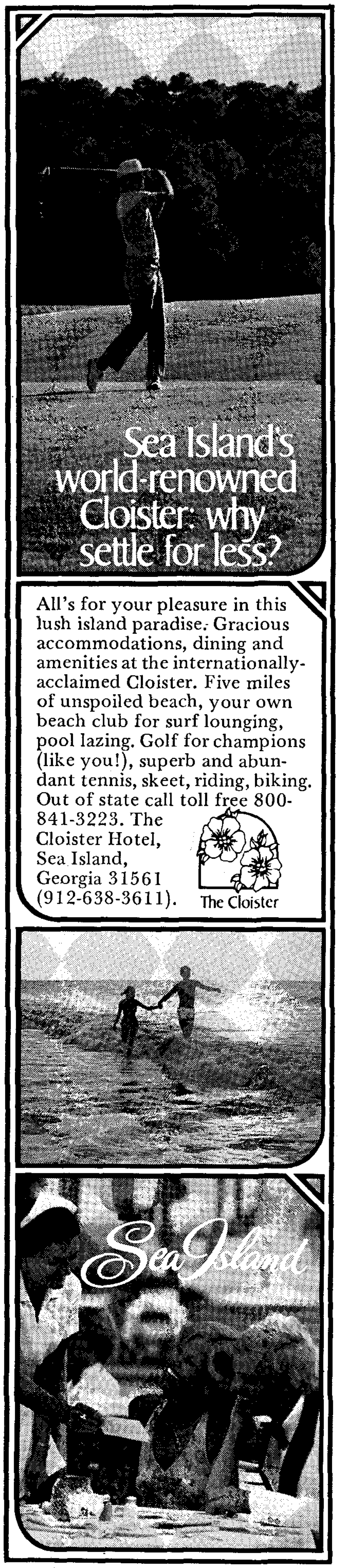
IN March of 1975, the London *Sunday Times* published a collection of the opinions of a variety of sportswriters on the ills of sport—a forum designed to coincide with the meeting, in Brussels, of Ministers of Sport from various European countries to scrutinize some of the international dissatisfactions that had lately been cropping up. It surprised me to read the wistful plaints and discerning grouses, for sportswriters generally give the impression of living comfortably in their separate sporting reality, and write of games with the gravity and high seriousness of war correspondents. On this occasion, some of them took the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spectators' part, and castigated various sports in turn for failing to entertain, for succumbing to negative tactics, for bending the rules, for regimenting individual eccentricity. Those who wrote from the players' side complained of pressures and programs that turned the game sour, killing pleasure and weakening commitment. Obviously, all is not well in sporting circles, and for a whole anthology of reasons. Keith Botsford, in a perceptive short piece, saw sport in its proper perspective, as part of present-day society—as a consequence of it. The mixing of sport and money, he noted, had led to the exploitation of both players and public. Sport as pure activity or game had long since given way to ruthless organization. And he added:

> A lot is due to the way in which the body has become one of the cardinal concepts of twentieth-century life. Pandered to by armies of equipment-makers, pros, sexologists, dieticians, doctors, ministries abetted by promoters and over-eager hockey mistresses alike, the sports body has reached the obsessive stage and lost sight of its original intention of pleasure.

It seems ironic that the well-legislated activities that the British planted magnanimously in so many unlikely foreign contexts have turned into major social confusions. What was clear from the meeting in Brussels and the troubled comments in the *Sunday Times* was that nobody mixed up in sport, either on or off the field, was having much fun. It all confirmed me in an opinion I have had for some time: that the sporting context is ripe for anthropologists; that when they are ranging around for a proper context in which to do fieldwork, they ought to converge on the sports field. There is nothing simple about the problems that beset organized sport, nothing that can be corrected by changing the rules or the shape of the ball; but it is at least an area over which we can legislate fairly directly, a subreality that we ought to be able to modify quite drastically. Sport is not a matter of life and death, but it appears to be doing little more at the moment than defeating its own purpose.

•

THE point about games is that they came into being—and keep on coming into being—to pass the time. Pastimes, *passe-temps*. The imperceptible flow of time is intolerable without some punctuation, and games are precisely that. Their rules impose a brief order, and we enter into them for as long as they last. But they are

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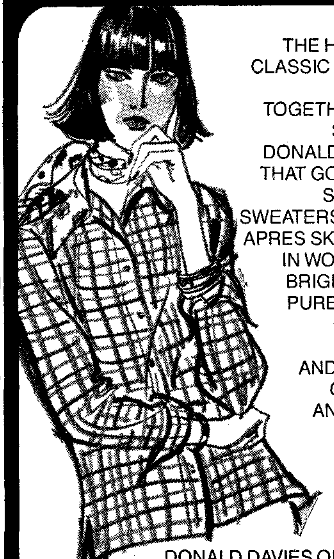

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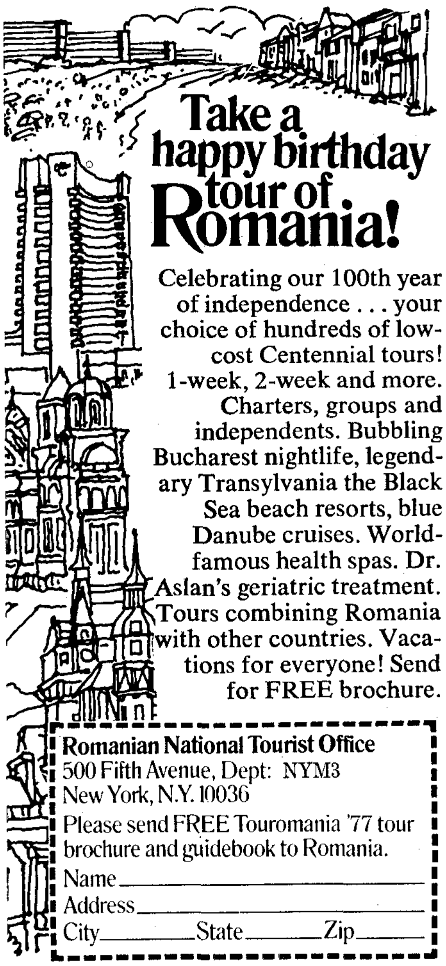

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not meant to have a separate, tyrannical existence. It is not surprising that the English have been responsible for launching so many games, because they have a strongly compulsive bent toward order. But one has to be wary of being carried away by the neat orderliness of a game, for it is to some extent a deception. The larger confusion has arisen as games have continued through time and acquired a lore and a past, as sport has developed into a vast, worldwide enterprise. It is from this that I feel we ought to dissociate ourselves, because games imply activity, not passivity—the activity of a player, not the passivity of a spectator. If games are meant to be a temporary, passing pleasure, as I think they are, then surely, in an existential sense, we ought to forget them the moment they are over. They are there to be played again and again. Any attempt to keep them happening in language or on film seems superfluous, and irrelevant to their purpose. The moment, the act of playing, the pleasure of their happening—these are what count. But games serve different purposes for different people. I recall a friend of mine, a passionate soccer follower, saying to me some years ago, "I once contemplated suicide; and then I thought, How could I bear not knowing whether Chelsea would win or not next Saturday, and every Saturday after that? So I put the thought out of my head."

•

THE relevance of Borges' story to the sporting scene has never been more clearly demonstrated than in the occasional confrontations, increasing over the last few years, between political realists and the ruling authorities in the world of sport. These have cropped up with some regularity in Britain, because of its well-established habit of sending touring rugby and cricket teams to South Africa and receiving all-white South African teams in exchange. Inevitably, this bland situation came under fire and fist, and a few beefy demonstrations on the playing surfaces were enough to keep the South Africans from ever bringing segregated teams to Britain again. But it proved not quite so easy to change matters in the other direction. In 1974, the British Lions rugby team, selected from the best players in the four home countries, got ready for a scheduled summer tour of South Africa and Rhodesia and instantly ran into uproar in the press. The hubbub was strong enough for the British government to step in and request the rugby officials of the four

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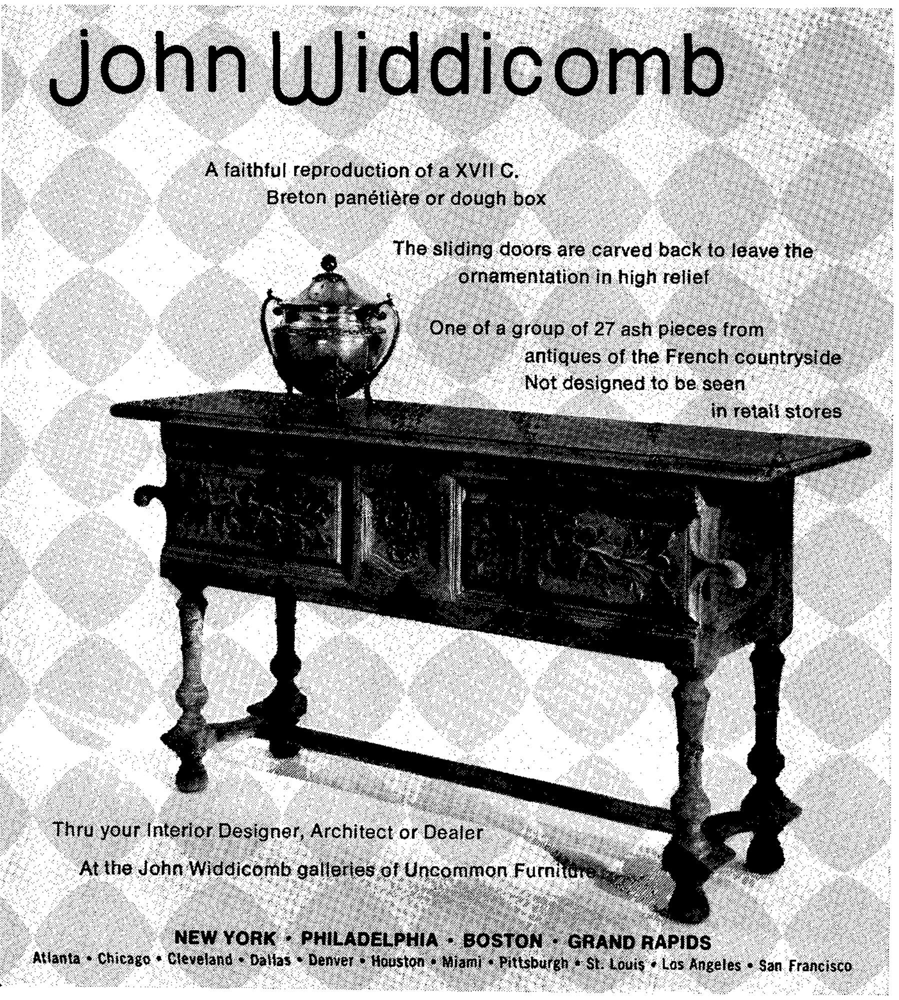
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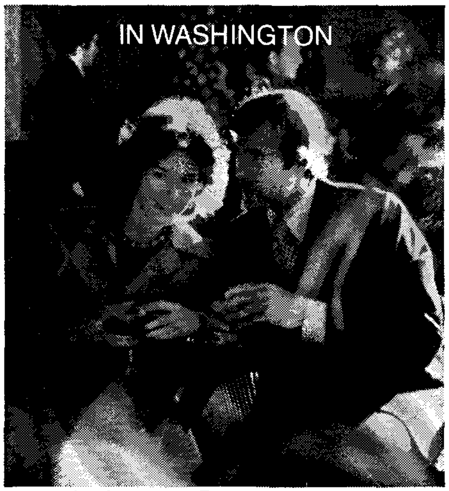

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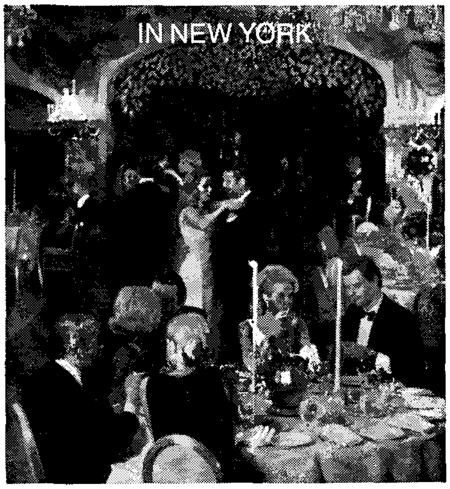

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home countries to cancel the tour. They refused, whereupon the government, which was powerless to prohibit the tour, withdrew all diplomatic assistance and support from the touring side. The tour took place. The governing bodies of rugby and cricket, in particular, are often characterized by the sporting press as dinosaurs, and they can be impressively obdurate by any standard. But what these confrontations have shown is that the sporting powers genuinely believe that sport and political life, or real life, are quite separate, and they insist on the division. The same illusion was incarnate in the stubborn figure of the late Avery Brundage, the long-ruling curmudgeon of the Olympics. Such attitudes hark back to balmier days, when sport was neutral, when games took place in small, private worlds; but that time has been brutally trampled underfoot, as many international contests demonstrate. If the British used to treat war as though it were a game of cricket, international matches, especially on the soccer field, are now likely to be viewed as war—if not by the players, then, most bluntly, by the fans. I doubt very much whether sport can any longer be maintained as a separate, innocent reality. Sporting events have become real events, not play; and as such they are subject to all the confusions of our tangled reality.

•

I LOOK with some awe on those who have managed to avoid the ranging tentacles of sport, although their numbers must surely have shrunk through the agency of television, which in England claims to have converted legions of housewives to manly pursuits. It seems that only lighthouse keepers are invulnerable. It is certainly difficult to remain aloof from the attendant hoo-ha—notably from the legions of fans who trudge in the wake of their teams, especially soccer fans, whose antics constitute a national menace in Britain. A soccer game lasts only ninety minutes, but the pilgrimage undertaken by the visiting fans may well last the whole weekend, leaving a considerable amount of loose time. Of late, the fans have taken to filling this time by dismantling trains, buses, stores, bars, and rival fans, and in retrospect the season's casualty list looks brutal. In May of 1975, Scotland's soccer team was due to play England at Wembley Stadium, on the outskirts of London, and while much of the country quivered in anticipation a good proportion of London's population quivered for quite other reasons. Scotland was favored to win

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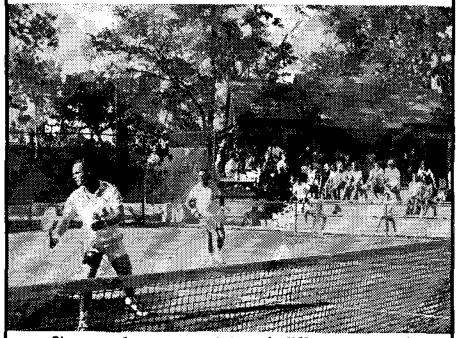

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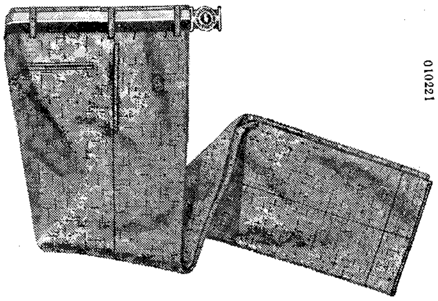

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on form, but every contest between these two ancient enemies invokes a bloodstained history of resentment, given more of an edge by the recent upsurge of nationalism in Scotland. (I suspect, however, that, in their secret selves, the Scots expect defeat: a friend of mine told me he saw, at the end of a game Scotland had lost, two tartan fans unrolling a well-tailored banner bearing the legend "We Wuz Robbed.") The suburban train drivers who run the service from the city center to the stadium announced a Saturday strike in protest over the last thunderous visit of the Scottish fans—a rampage that had brought serious injury to one railwayman. This left the majority of the fans with an eight-mile walk out to the stadium, and shopkeepers along the route took to boarding up their windows. By Friday evening, London looked as though it had been invaded—knots of Scotsmen splashed the city with tartan scarves and bonnets, and their flags wagged on the street corners. The bars were thick with dire, guttural prognostications. On Saturday morning, I felt I had never seen so many of my countrymen, even in Scotland, for they were already singing victory songs, and seemed ready to take over the seat of government if Scotland won. That morning, I was passing through the park close to where I live when I ran into a neighbor, a retired naval man, who stopped me. "It is not my wont to watch football matches," he said gravely, "but I intend to follow this afternoon's proceedings closely. I have calculated, from experience, that if Scotland should lose, which appears unlikely, then its followers will behave in a subdued manner, and be reduced to morbid introspection. But should it win, then I fear for the safety of our persons and our institutions. Is this not a situation which alarms you?" It was, I said; and it did. I watched the game anxiously, and, improbably, England hit form and won, by five emphatic goals to one. The old man was right—the fans were subdued, and London survived. And, may my ancestors forgive me, I was relieved.

—ALASTAIR REID

•

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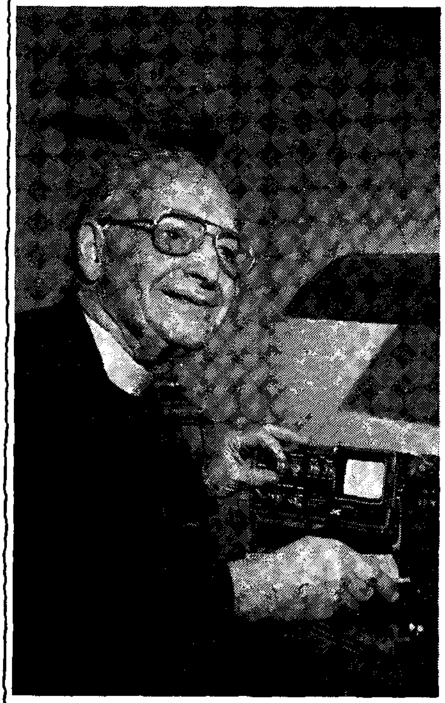

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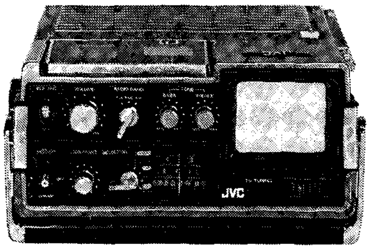

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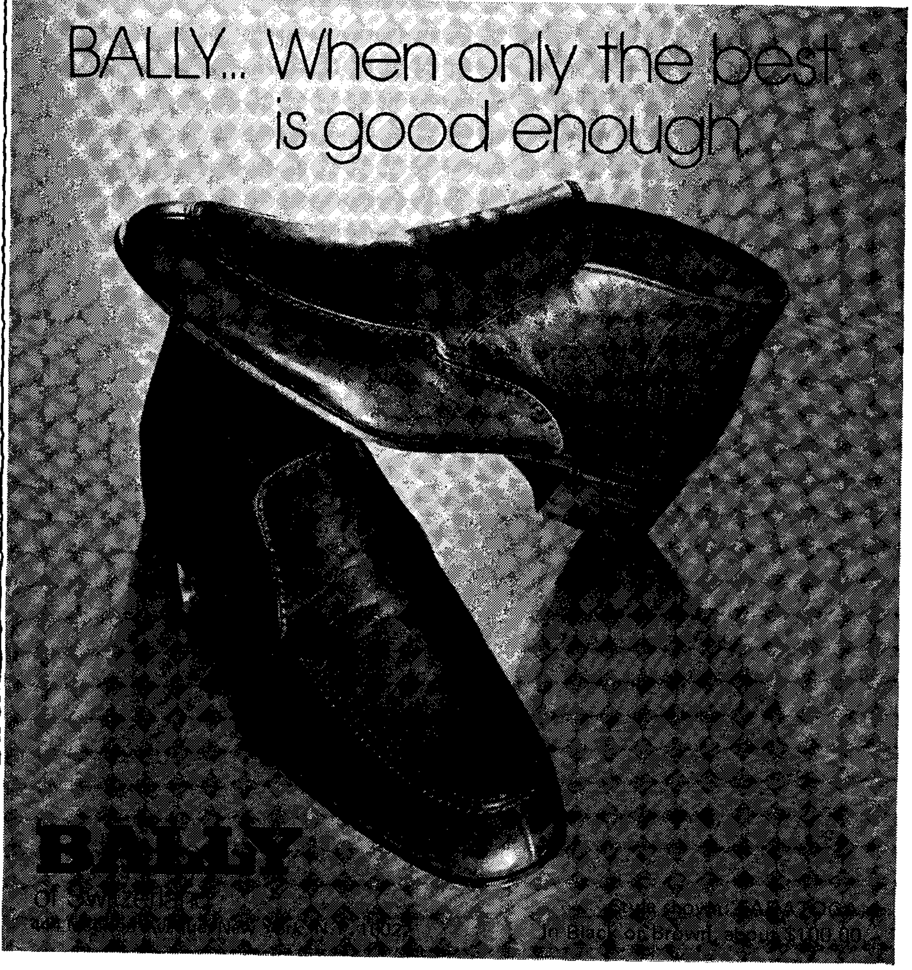
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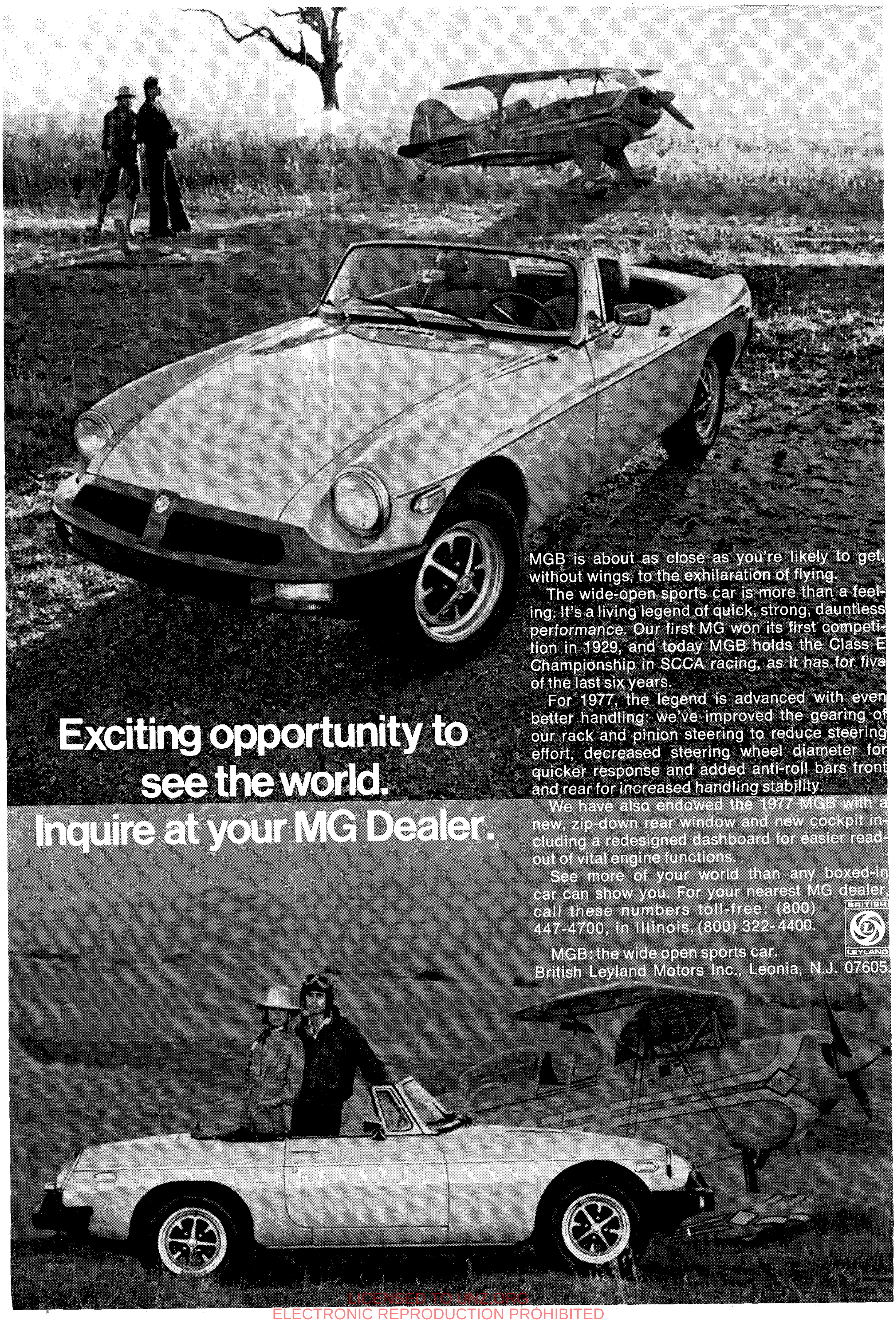
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DANCING

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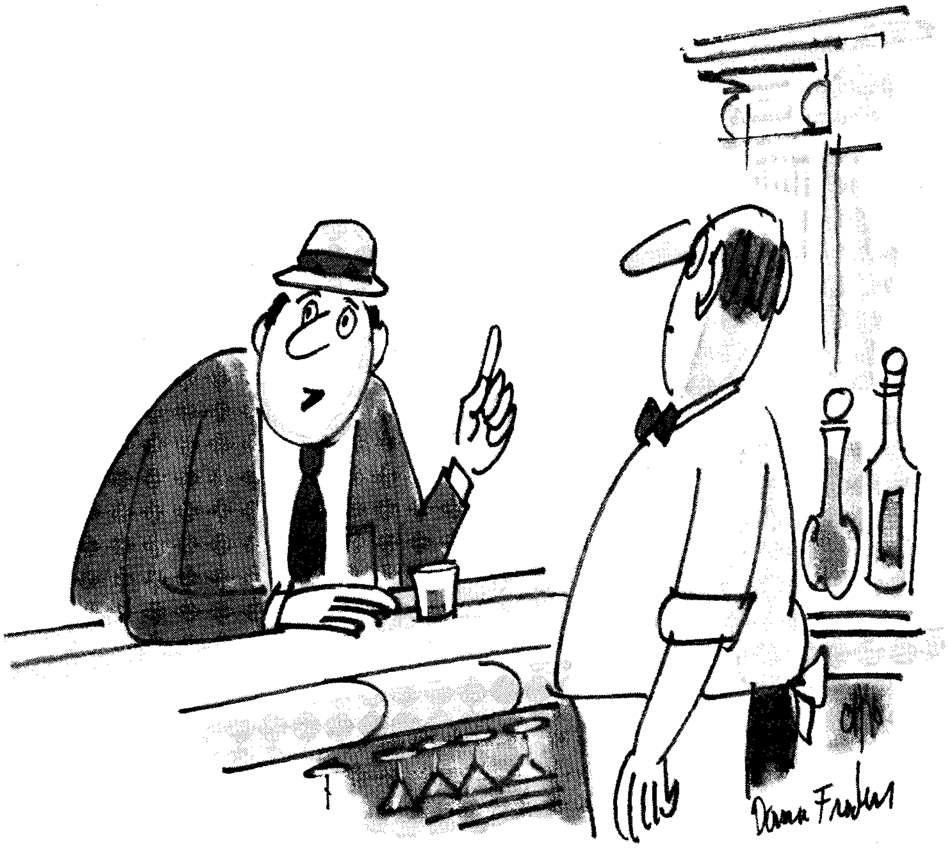
AS the sole première of its truncated winter season, the New York City Ballet is giving "Bournonville Divertissements," with a collection of prize performances by Danes and non-Danes alike. There is the astonishing dancing that one gets from Peter Martins, the King of Denmark; there is the authoritative dancing of Adam Lüders, another Danish soloist, who joined the company not long ago; there is the limpid, meticulous dancing of Helgi Tomasson, formed in part by Danish training. But for the American dancers "Bournonville Divertissements" marks a professional début in an unaccustomed style. Peter Schaufuss, the third of the company's true Danes, is not in the cast; it is Robert Weiss who dances in the trio from "La Ventana," and Daniel Duell who takes the principal role of Gennaro in the Ballabile from "Napoli," Act I. Duell, whose career has been accelerating lately, confirms the strong impression he has already made. But Weiss, in a more demanding role, is a surprise. He has always had the stretch and spring necessary to Bournonville and to his repertory roles, but his flaws, which include a bad hunch, helpless arms, and a two-dimensional torso, are miraculously corrected here. In "La Ventana," Weiss is careful, relaxed, and stylish; it's the best performance of his career.

There are other surprises. One of them is that the women are as good as the men. This seldom happens, even today, at the Royal Danish Ballet. Bournonville choreography consists of some of the most difficult combinations conceived by the mind of man, and most of them are for the body of man, too. August Bournonville (1805-1879) danced until he was forty-three. His fertility and ingenuity as a choreographer, which dominated Danish ballet to the end of his days, sprang directly from his strengths as a dancer and from his methods of disguising personal deficiencies. He was also a teacher, and undoubtedly a great one—scientifically wise and artistically unimpeachable. His studio in Copenhagen was a dancers' lab, hothouse, and proving ground, and it was the necessary link between Paris, where Vestris had once nurtured male dancing, and St. Petersburg, where it was, with Nijinsky, to rise again. A second after the curtain is up on "Napoli," the first of the "Bournonville Divertissements," we see Jean-Pierre Frohlich soaring into a sequence of double ronds de jambe sautés and beats, and the male ensemble behind him leaping as exactingly and as lustily, and we know that the men of the company are on to Bournonville's secrets. The proof that the women are on to them, too, isn't in Merrill Ashley's waltz variation in "La Ventana," tough as it is and brilliantly as she dances it. Ashley is, after all, the strongest female technician in the company. But Nichol Hlinka in "Napoli" and Kyra Nichols in "La Ventana" are revelations in featured roles, which, as corps girls, they seldom get. Little Hlinka, the Teresina to Duell's Gennaro, reveals herself softly but roundly. She does many of the daunting steps he does, including a turning jeté into high, still arabesque, which, in the enterprising Bournonville manner, shuts and reopens itself in reverse (assemblé, sissonne). What a lovely illusion this is, constant in Bournonville, of the dancer finding his feet only to throw them away only to find them again. Miss Nichols' variation is very much a point variation, however, in which the repeated relevés emphasize constancy in the feet themselves. The date is 1854, and use of the full point in unblocked shoes was not extensive. One can feel Bournonville pushing for a feminine touch. Modern ballerina technique was, of course, a post-Bournonville development. It arose from sustained pointwork, which made possible the supported adagio, with its aura of sexuality in partnering. This is something we never see on Bournonville's stage. In point technique, the difference was like going from plucked strings to bowed strings. The beginnings of a major discovery are apt to have a peculiar beauty and dignity. Kyra Nichols, emerging from her historical cocoon, could be a major discovery, too.

I don't know whether to call Colleen Neary's performance a surprise or not. This greatly talented but erratic dancer tends to rush her audience with effects that she can't always control. Yet the tendency is also a part of her charm. The excerpt from "A Folk Tale" is the dashing "gypsy" pas de sept; it releases all of Neary's exuberance while containing her technically. She has length, breadth, and ballon—bounce—to spare. She and Adam Lüders do one of Bournonville's signature variations on the grand jeté dessus en tournant, in which the body pivots on the landing foot to face the raised one. The way Neary does it, with a strength equal to



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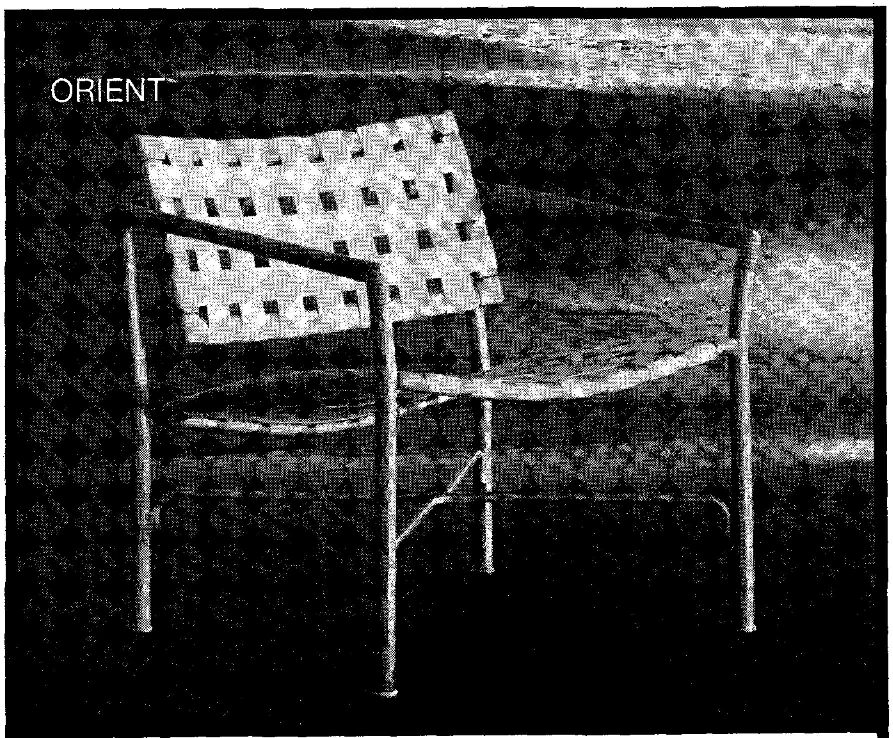

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his, but with a yawning port de bras that seems to bring a flush to her cheeks, makes you want to burst out laughing. She gives the wittiest performance in the ballet.

The most curious performances are given by Patricia McBride and Suzanne Farrell. These two, Balanchine's star ballerinas, bring out the connections that exist between Balanchine and Bournonville, but, because they're fully formed and matured dancers who, in a sense, make their own rules, they don't bring out much that isn't superficial. It's the other dancers, still growing and learning, who show the profound connection between the two masters—a connection that makes us speak of Bournonville, despite his period, as a "modern" choreographer. In Bournonville as in Balanchine, correct training prepares the dancer for non-stop continuity, complex combinations, neatness and fullness of execution. Visually, the experience of Bournonville is high-density, like Balanchine (and, one might add, with "Torse" and "Rebus" in mind, like Merce Cunningham). The steps are joined together with infinitesimal links and preparations and are launched from the front of the foot. The raised heel, the quick and powerful instep create speed, vivacity, mercurial contrast. Bournonville was to dancing in the nineteenth century what Bellini and Donizetti were to singing: there is no separation between substance and decoration. But isn't that almost a definition of Patricia McBride? McBride's troubles in Bournonville are purely technical. Her turnout is not great, and this dims her croisé positions and deprives the extended leg of the arrowy sharpness it should have. She lacks ballon, an essential element in Bournonville. In her pas de deux with Tomasson (from the first act of "Kermesse in Bruges"), Tomasson keeps us wondering whether he has ballon or not, and he fakes the elevation he doesn't have by using his arms to lift himself skyward in the big jumps. McBride has no such opportunity; she's cursed with the neat-petite, percussively bounding style, and though one sighs in relief when she finally gets some air into a big pas-de-chat series, her range seems pinched off at one end. There are Balanchine ballets that evoke Bournonville in which McBride has been wondrously successful—"Donizetti Variations" and "Tarantella"—and in the second performance she even wore her "Donizetti Variations" costume, a kind of talisman, perhaps. It didn't help much. McBride is too unorthodox a ballerina—unorthodox even in Balanchine—to exemplify any school.

Suzanne Farrell, who dances with Martins in the famous pas de deux from "Flower Festival in Genzano," is a study in contradictions that are resolved almost before you have time to be bothered by them. In the second performance, she was less noticeably nervous (she'd stopped bouncing her wrists, an infallible sign), but she still overscaled the steps and phrased them—well, peculiarly. And there is nothing for her to do with the period coquette manners of the piece but guy them. Still, every effect that is wrong for the piece is right for her, and strangely interesting. It's Farrellized Bournonville—an independent show within a show.

Stanley Williams, who staged "Bournonville Divertissements," is a master of the style, a former solo dancer of the Royal Danish Ballet who has taught at the School of American Ballet since 1964. The staging is a climax not only to his career at the school but also to the Balanchine-Bournonville alliance. Williams' coaching emphasizes principles that are common to the two choreographers, but he sees to it that we do not even momentarily confuse two very different styles. It's unusual for this company of turners to be jumping so often and turning so seldom. (Bournonville himself was weak in pirouettes.) It's odd to see those "flat" Bournonville turns—more like reversals of direction than turns. The N.Y.C.B. audience is finding that it takes more than one viewing to absorb this exotic spectacle. Once we get used to the range of the choreography, the ratio of large to small effects becomes clear, and steps that had seemed obscure take on variety and distinction. Bournonville steps are beguiling. They're like traps to catch the eye. Watch how they keep their openness through an entire variation, how they sail along on the upbeat, how, instead of resting or closing, the feet are free to find new paths, veering this way and that, amazing and confounding us, until with a sudden finality they spring shut. The dancer who has been bounding like a flea stands there innocently still in fifth.

The production has been handsomely mounted—with costumes, by Ben Benson, after the original Danish models, and with gathered velvet drapes framing a cyclorama lit, by Ronald Bates, in changing colors. "Bournonville Divertissements" is an enthralling show of dancers deeply engaged with assemblé, emboîté, rond de jambe, ballonné, batterie—in short, with dancers' material. The period style and the prescience of these dances will fascinate us for a long time to come.

—Arlene Croce

• •

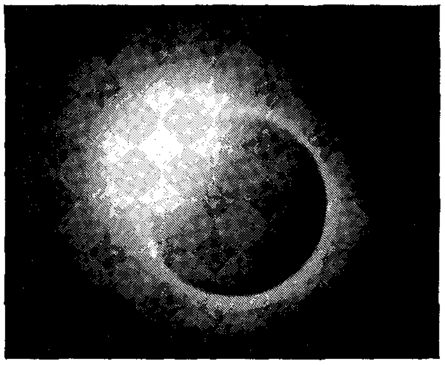
MY FATHER'S WALL

The old one was falling: the cracked, gravelly pieces flaking
Like a good start on a ruin down the steep driveway
Into our basement garage. My father (stonemason,
Self-taught) and I (apprentice to other sorcerers)
Slapped up the shiplap form with soleplates and raking shores
Sawed out of foundling lumber. When the truck backed in
With two yards of ready mix jumbling in its drum
And the chute swung over, we thought we'd be all set.

The bulges started low—planks springing out like strakes
And a gray mass surging and slobbering at our ankles—
And as he braced and yelled and improvised, I shovelled
What leaked below back over that unmanned barricade
Again and again, but it flushed down through six feet of baffles
Faster than I could keep it up. I'd shovelled coal and cinders,
Sand and dirt, even manure in my meagre time, but nothing
That had wanted to be somewhere else and something else so badly.

Gradually the mess thickened and slowed, and more stayed in
Than ran away. It put up with our planks, now only dripping
Through the sprung seams, and while our overalls hardened
Into permanent contortions like war-memorial drapery
And our feet grew heavier inside their concrete boots,
We left it to bleed all night without us. But in my sleep
I listened for all four tons to break loose, rumbling down slope
To the garage: a solid, no-nonsense, no-passenger family tank.

—David Wagoner



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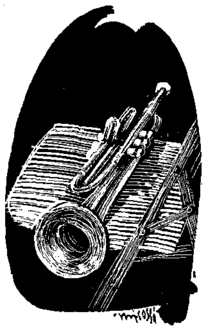
New York Notes



January 3rd: Erroll Garner last appeared in New York at the Maisonette Room of the St. Regis in May of 1974. His playing was effulgent. There were the running single-note melodic lines, the rattling octave chords, the dynamics, which moved from whispers to shouts, from shushing to inciting, and the one-man-band left hand, with its guitar chords and pushing offbeat single notes. He looked as he always had—a short, gleaming, funny, cooking man, his black hair a mirror, his great parrot nose pointed into the winds of his invention. He rocked and grunted and hummed at the keyboard, and his astonishing hands—he could span thirteen notes—went like jackhammers. The ad-lib whirlpool introductions to his numbers, sometimes eight bars and more, seemed to have spread and deepened, to be complete, superbly manic compositions, and his four-four improvisations were joyous and intense. Not long after the Maisonette gig, Garner fell ill with pneumonia, complicated by emphysema, and, never having fully recovered, he died yesterday at the age of fifty-three.

Garner was an anachronism, for he was a true folk musician, who belonged with the great jazz primitives of the twenties and thirties. He was self-taught, he never learned to read music, and, like all masterly folk artists, he developed a style of such originality and presence that it became nearly autonomous. One bar was enough to identify him, and his style was so persuasive, and pervasive, that he influenced older pianists (Earl Hines), pianists of his own generation (Oscar Peterson, George Shearing, Red Garland), and pianists of the next generation (Cecil Taylor). Garner never finished high school, and he was untroubled by the lapses of confidence and invention which academic training often instills. Indeed, he was embarrassingly confident and inventive. The critic and record producer George Avakian describes a Garner recording session for Columbia in 1953: "Erroll rattled off thirteen numbers, averaging over six minutes each . . . with no rehearsal and no re-takes. Even with a half-hour pause for coffee, we were finished twenty-seven minutes ahead of the three hours of normal studio time—but Erroll had recorded over eighty minutes of music instead of the usual ten or twelve, and . . . his performance . . . could not have been improved upon. He asked to hear playbacks on two of the numbers, but only listened to a chorus or so of each, before he waved his hand." And Garner appeared equally at ease in night clubs and on concert stages. He became the first wholly successful solo jazz performer. (Although he often appeared with a bassist and a drummer, they were extraneous.) This was startling and brave, but it was unfortunate, too, for his rare collaborations with horn players were enthralling. In the fifties, Garner had been almost underfoot; in the seventies, he seemed to have receded from view. So this dazzling, unique performer was all but lost to a generation. Mary Lou Williams, who has become Mother Jazz, has said of Garner, "Erroll came from my home town of Pittsburgh, and I first heard him there in a little joint when he was fifteen or sixteen. One of my nieces went to Westinghouse High School with him, and she'd told me about him. He was like Art Tatum—all over the keyboard. He started coming to New York, which scared him at first, in the late thirties or early forties, and he was always in my house. When I was at Café Society Downtown, I'd get home at four in the morning and Erroll would arrive at five and start playing my piano. One time, I took him to a symphony, and he loved what he heard so much that he rolled on the floor when he got back to my place, and then he sat down and played the whole thing. He had that kind of ear. Another time, he was playing here and he shouted suddenly, 'I got it! I got it!' What had happened was he'd found that bum-bum-bum-bum four-beats-to-the-bar left hand that he used the rest of his life. I tried to teach him to read once, but it didn't work. After a while, he said, 'Ooooooh, Mary. I can't cut that,' and he never learned. I also tried to get him to slow down and forget about Art Tatum when he was starting out, and he did. Nobody influenced *his* playing after that, and his style was completely his own, just like his fingering, which was built on a love of the piano keys. Partly, he worked his style out so that he would never need bass and drums, which he didn't, and partly so that he could reach the public easily, which he did. But the style he played in your house was wild and totally different. Erroll liked to laugh. He was so comical you'd have to break down. He didn't like statics or arguments. If you asked him about another musician, he always had a nice word. He never said anything disagreeable about anybody. He was like a little boy, like a jolly kid of seven or eight playing baseball. And he was like Art Tatum, because he liked to hang out and play any raggedy old piano in any club or in anybody's house. He influenced a lot of piano players, and I think a lot of musicians were jealous of him for his success and all the money he made on songs he wrote, like 'Misty.' But Erroll didn't have time to let that bother him. He was too busy writing his songs in his head and playing the piano."

January 14th: The arpeggio became fashionable in jazz in the forties. Propounded by Art Tatum and Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, the teeming, steaming run, ascending or descending, was taken up by every pianist, guitarist, trumpeter, and saxophonist. Some players used so many notes their solos resembled enormous glissandos. The individual note was sacrificed for the collective babble, and silence, which allows music to breathe, vanished. Jazz began to sound giddy and harebrained. For a time, the trombone, alone among jazz instruments, resisted such baroque behavior. One of the most vulnerable of instruments, because of its technical oddities, its generous tone, and its lyrical propensities, the trombone had been a musical clown before being turned in the thirties into an affecting and poetic voice by Dicky Wells and J. C. Higginbotham and Lawrence Brown. But the young trombonists of the forties, envious of Parker's cascades, decided that the only way to get into the Bebop Club was to be a virtuoso. So they adopted an icy, nasal tone, stuffed their phrases with notes, and ran up and down their registers as if they were pianists or saxophonists, and when this untrombonelike attack didn't work they blared and became surly-toned. The ruminative grandeur of Wells and Higginbotham gave way to the ceaseless cul-de-sac skating of J. J. Johnson, and then of Jimmy Cleveland, Urbie Green, Carl Fontana, and Bill Watrous. The trombone had become an eccentric again. The new trombone virtuosity obscured the fact that the proper next step after Wells and Brown and Higginbotham had been taken. This was done quietly in the fifties by the brilliant and still largely unappreciated Jimmy Knepper.

A tall, diffident man with a small, closed face, Knepper was born in Los Angeles in 1927 and was playing the trombone by the time he was nine. He had some college training, and passed through the big bands of Charlie Barnet, Charlie Spivak, Claude Thornhill, Woody Herman, and Stan Kenton, and played in small groups with Charlie Parker and Gene Roland and Art Pepper. In 1957, he joined the first, and in many ways the most important, of Charles Mingus's seminars, and it was immediately clear that he had absorbed Higginbotham and Wells and Brown (the bop trombonists either had sidestepped or were ignorant of them) as well as the rhythmic and harmonic advances of Parker and Gillespie. Knepper had, and has, none of the dandyism of J. J. Johnson and his followers, nor does he blare or whine or shout. He has a loose, warm tone and a way of easing out his notes—even his occasional arpeggios—with an over-the-shoulder offhandedness. He seems to lounge when he plays. But his serenity is highly deceptive, for he is a subtle and intense and complex trombonist. He is an epigrammatist of a high order. His phrases, choice and balanced and to the point, are smoothly linked so that entire solo choruses form an uninterrupted melodic line. His gentle tone resembles Lawrence Brown's, but he also shares Dicky Wells' delight in the inherent heresies of his instrument. Knepper's low notes are sometimes rude and raucous, his high notes wild and harum-scarum. Plain in every phrase are the practices of Parker and Gillespie: the eighth notes, the ninth chords, the short, meteoric runs that start a split second late, the odd, quirky bittersweet notes. Parker loved to open his blues solos with quick, shocking preacher phrases, and Knepper will do the same. He will fashion a six- or seven-note announcement, its notes spread unevenly over an octave, so that they seem to bob and weave as they go by, and then pause, repeat the phrase, but with most of its notes altered a tone or half a tone, pause briefly again, and swing into an ascending passage topped with a small, high yell, followed by two low closing notes. He will start the second chorus with an intense double-time variation of his first-chorus announcement, pass through a low-curving, distant-hills note that ends in congested eighth notes, and, after a brief connecting slur, start a blue note, cut it off, drop in a couple of triplets, and soar into his third and final chorus with a rapid series of ascending and descending notes, which he carries, with infinitesimal breaks, through to the end of the chorus. His volume has risen and fallen almost imperceptibly all through the solo, and one realizes only at the end the extraordinary urgency propelling each phrase. Some soloists wait for their notes; Knepper pursues his. The best improvisers of Knepper's generation are singularly delicate and thoughtful, and demand close attention. Knepper's solos are propositions of musical beauty, not face-to-face pronouncements, and if you turn your ear they're gone.

Knepper's career has been evanescent. He has, considering his greatness as a trombonist, been poorly recorded. He made several fine records with Charles Mingus in the late fifties and early sixties, some of which are available on Atlantic and Columbia, and one of which, "Tia Juana Moods," has recently been reissued by RCA (APL 1-0939), but the sessions made around the same time under his own name are long out of print. During the past couple of years, he has appeared fleetingly on records with both Chuck Israels' National Jazz Ensemble and the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra, and he has a total of eight bars on the new Lee Konitz Nonet recording on Roulette. But now he can be heard at fair length (about seven choruses in all) on "A Buck Clayton Jam Session, Volume 3," which has just been issued on Chiaroscuro (CR-152). Knepper's compatriots are genial. On hand are the saxophonists Lee Konitz, Earle Warren, Buddy Tate, Budd Johnson, and Bob Wilber; the trumpeters Harry Edison and Hannibal; the trombonist Vic Dickenson; and a rhythm section of Hank Jones, Richard Davis, and Bobby Rosengarden. There are four numbers—three of them reworkings of old standards and one a blues—and all have been arranged by Clayton, who has a pleasant early Basie touch. (He does not play.) The record tips its hat to the famous Buck Clayton jam-session L.P.s

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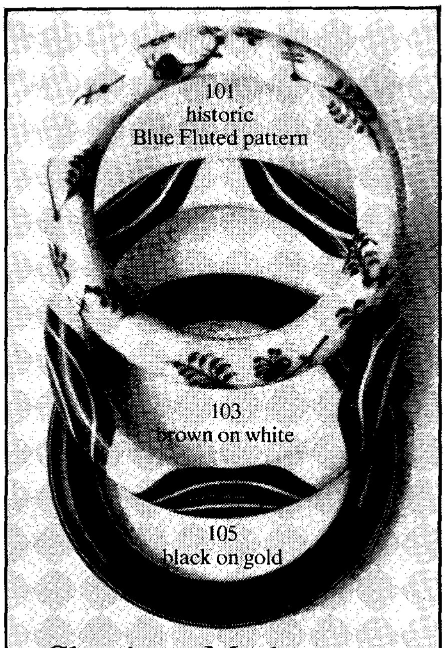
made for Columbia twenty or so years ago and featuring, in notably relaxed performances, such as Coleman Hawkins, Ruby Braff, Clayton, Trummy Young, Jo Jones, and Sir Charles Thompson. It doesn't achieve the same riffling ease, but everyone solos well—in particular, Wilber, Johnson, Dickenson, Warren, and Knepper. Knepper takes one of his floating, overview solos on "Jazz Party Time," and shares some eight-bar exchanges with Dickenson at the end, where he fashions two model non-stop melodic lines. He takes three exemplary choruses on the medium blues "Kansas City Style," just one chorus on "Even Steven" (everyone else has two), and is heard only in some eight-bar exchanges at the very end of the ludicrously fast "Bandwagon." One suspects that Knepper likes meatier musical surroundings, and he has just that every Wednesday and Thursday at Stryker's, where he is playing with Konitz's Nonet. The group uses ensemble devices ranging from complex Lennie Tristano unison passages to mock-Dixieland tuttis, and it has a good, plunging full-voiced attack. The best thing about the group, aside from Konitz's marvellous fusion of Lester Young and Charlie Parker, is Knepper, who, the unaccountable Roulette record notwithstanding, solos a lot and is wholly relaxed. He was especially commanding tonight on his own blues, "Birth of a Nation," on Konitz's arrangement of "Without a Song," and on a Tristano melodic line that, used as an opener, caught everyone with cold disjointed chops and sounded like an old Archie Shepp bee.

JANUARY 28TH: At long last, jazz appears to be slowing down. The music has been moved forward (or sometimes just sideways) by stylistic upheavals every fifteen years or so: the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, 1917; Louis Armstrong and Earl Hines, 1930; Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie and Bud Powell, 1945; Cecil Taylor and Ornette Coleman, 1960. The next explosion is overdue, but there is nothing on the horizon. Repertory groups are proliferating, and one can hear facsimiles of everything from the early California Ramblers to the Miles Davis of ten years ago. Skilled young musicians are modelling themselves—not slavishly but with freshness and invention—on Bix Beiderbecke, Lester Young, Charlie Christian, Coleman Hawkins, and Adrian Rollini. Reissues abound, and so do new issues of old radio broadcasts and radio transcriptions



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(sixteen-inch discs made only for radio play). The avant-garde, kept simmering throughout the sixties by Coleman and Taylor and John Coltrane, is taking a hard look at what it has wrought. One of its incidental acts in the sixties was the rediscovery of the soprano saxophone, a difficult instrument (pitch problems, mostly) that fell into disuse after Sidney Bechet's death, in 1959. Coltrane is generally credited with bringing it back, but he probably took it up because of Steve Lacy, who began playing it while Bechet was still alive. (Tenor saxophonists of every persuasion now use it as their second instrument, and Bob Wilber, who is probably its finest practitioner, plays it almost full time. The soprano and the string bass have become the instruments of the seventies.) In 1967, Lacy moved to Europe, and now—a forty-two-year-old with a delicate, almost transparent handsomeness—he has returned for an exploratory two-week visit, and appearances at such downtown spas as The Kitchen, Environ, and Ali's Alley, where he played tonight.

Before Lacy went abroad, he gave an interview that was printed in *The Jazz Review* and reprinted in "Jazz Panorama," a book assembled from that magazine by Martin Williams in 1962. Lacy said:

> [Music] can be regarded as excited speech, imitation of the sounds of nature, an abstract set of symbols, a baring of emotions, an illustration of interpersonal relationships, an intellectual game, a device for inducing reverie, a mating call, a series of dramatic events, an articulation of time and/or space, an athletic contest . . . A jazz musician is a combination orator, dialectician, mathematician, athlete, entertainer, poet, singer, dancer, diplomat, educator, student, comedian, artist, seducer . . . and general all-around good fellow.

Lacy practices what he preaches. His playing tonight was excited, bucolic, abstract, emotional, intellectual, seductive, dramatic, and spatial. It demonstrated that the jazz avant-garde is refining itself. The relentless blats and roars and screams and shrieks of the sixties—purposeful rude black jungle noises—have been muted and clarified, or simply discarded. The avant-garde, having shaken jazz up by freeing its rhythms and replacing chordal improvising with thematic, and even a highly personal, almost notional, improvising, has brought back some of the old verities of jazz in new dress: lyricism, form, the domestic emotions. This is true not only of Lacy but of Anthony Braxton and the quicksilver Revolutionary Ensemble. Like Roswell Rudd, the premier

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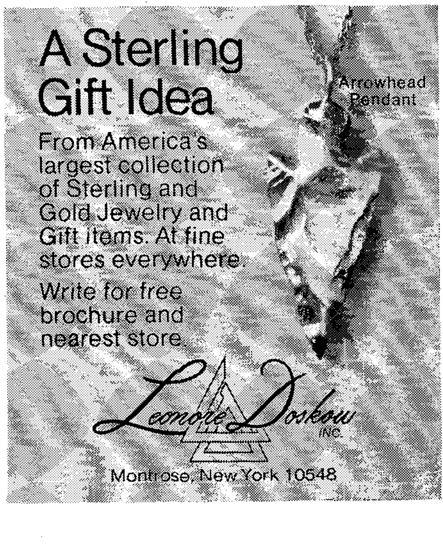

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trombonist of the avant-garde, Lacy came up in Dixieland and swing bands and then passed through the nimbuses of Cecil Taylor and Thelonious Monk. Lacy is a first-rate musician. He has a full tone, his pitch is steady, and he is extraordinarily facile. (Staying in tune doesn't mean much in Lacy's music, because keys and tonal centers have all but vanished. However, one can judge pretty well after a time whether a musician is playing what he wants to play or is hitting clams.) There was not as much of Lacy's playing in the set I heard tonight as I would have liked. Most of the first number consisted of long stretches of semi-atonal ensemble, in which Lacy and the alto saxophonist Steve Potts played rough unison or antiphonal figures. The second piece had a steplike theme, and Lacy soloed ruminatively and at considerable length. He began in the middle register and then moved up, revealing a sweet tone, and passed into an endless series of falsetto figures, sprinkled with squeaks and trills. The third number opened as if the two horns were warming up, and for a minute or so one didn't realize that they had *begun*. After a windy alto solo, Lacy put forth his musical credo. We heard dogs, birds, anguished abstractions, throat-clearings, squeals, blips, and quacks. His work has a curious double effect. Its surface is resolutely amusical in the conventional sense. It offers a series of disquieting semi-abstract sounds, repetitive circular rhythms, and obscure thematic materials. It is a self-centered music that sometimes seems to move wholly through shrouded inner landscapes. Yet Lacy plays with a fervency that carries within it the lyricism and daring we sensed when Armstrong and Parker and Taylor first arrived. Lacy's compatriots tonight worked on different, lower levels. Potts went around and around inside ballooning Queen Mary sounds, and his drummer, Oliver Johnson, had none of the subtlety and structure of Jerome Cooper, the futuristic metronome who keeps the Revolutionary Ensemble on the track.

FEBRUARY 1ST: A jubilant opening at Michael's Pub, in which an eight-week celebration of Alec Wilder's "American Popular Song" was launched by the singers David Allyn and Barbara Lea, who will be followed in due course by Mark Murphy, Marlene VerPlanck, Johnny Hartman, and Jackie Cain and Roy Kral. Tonight, Allyn did, among other songs, Harold Arlen's "Let's Fall in Love" and "Down with Love" and Jerome Kern's "She Didn't Say Yes" and "The Folks Who Live on the Hill," while Barbara Lea did Irving Berlin's "The Best Thing for You," Willard Robison's "Deep Summer Music," and Kern's last song, "Nobody Else But Me." Allyn is a legend among singers. He started at seventeen, in 1940, with Jack Teagarden's doleful big band, and eventually passed on to Boyd Raeburn, where he came to the fore. In 1946, he sank into a nine-year night of drug taking—he discussed his experience on the stand tonight—and since then he has worked both as a singer and in drug rehabilitation. He is a handsome, outspoken man and a handsome, gusty singer. His baritone ricochets when he turns on the steam, and he likes to throw in melismatics at crucial points. His phrasing and sense of dynamics swing, and his intonation and vibrato behave. But Allyn is disturbing: he comes first, and his songs come second. Barbara Lea is the reverse. She champions what she sings, and when she does a song she really loves, such as Robison's "Deep Summer Music," she makes it three-dimensional. She returned to singing from an acting career just a year or so ago, and she has already surpassed the neophyte who first appeared in New York in 1954. Her voice grows steadily, and her timing and diction are flawless. She has no glossiness. Her songs are fresh and pliable and finished. She works by hand, and she is a masterly craftsman. The accompanists are Norman Simmons, who has Ellis Larkins' way of presaging a singer, Milt Hinton, Mousey Alexander, and a new young guitarist from Providence named Chris Flory, who is said to play like Charlie Christian but was never given the chance to prove it.

FEBRUARY 11TH: Bobby Short is between stints at the Carlyle, and tonight he talked about his friend Nat Cole. "Nat was a nice man, a most amusing man," he said. "He was much given to the wisecrack, and he was irresistible to the ladies. You could see the humor in those strange Oriental eyes. I worked in a club with him in Omaha in 1943, when his records were just beginning to catch on. He had at least temporarily gotten himself out of

Los Angeles, where he had been a fixture for years on Eighth Street in the Negro section and where he was all but taken for granted. He was married first to a chorus girl named Nadine, then to Marie Ellington—no relation to Duke, with whom she sang. They bought a big house in Hancock Park, which was all white, and they had the usual threats and had to hire police guards. Marie brought in Tom Douglas, the best decorator around, and they lived in grand style. Nat's old friends thought he was putting on the ritz, but he had simply found a new way of life, because of commercial success. He was living up to that image and enjoying it, and I can understand that. You can't hang on to the old gang forever. He bought a house in Palm Springs, too, and became a part of the Sinatra scene and such, and eventually he was surrounded by songwriters and song pluggers. We were very different singers, but he invariably came to see me when I was in L.A. He never said anything about not being a jazz pianist any longer, but there's no question that he was very, very perceptive about music, and that he was one of the best pianists we have ever had."

Short is absolutely right. Cole belonged with Earl Hines and Art Tatum and Teddy Wilson, from all of whom he learned, and if he had concentrated on playing rather than on singing he might well have outclassed them all. He was born in Montgomery, Alabama, and raised in Chicago, where Hines, a fixture at the Grand Terrace, put his stamp on him. Cole worked in his brother's decent jump band in the mid-thirties, and put together his celebrated trio in Los Angeles in 1939, with Oscar Moore on guitar and Wesley Prince on bass. Cole's sparkling piano gave the trio sheen, and Moore's rambunctious Charlie Christian guitar anchored it. Jazz fans considered Cole's occasional agreeable vocals an excusable intrusion, but they became more and more frequent, and in 1943 his vocal version of "Straighten Up and Fly Right" was the trio's first hit. He gave up the trio in 1950, and five or six years later he was the most important popular singer in the country. Fortunately, Cole was well recorded as a pianist. He made a hundred and fifty trio sides, and he sat in on recording sessions with Buddy Rich, Lester Young, Charlie Shavers, Lionel Hampton, Coleman Hawkins. Cole's style was based on stunning single-note melodic lines. They flashed and turned and poured with an inventiveness and freshness that beat Wilson's chaste

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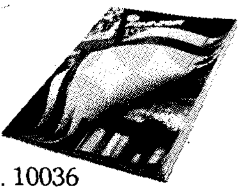

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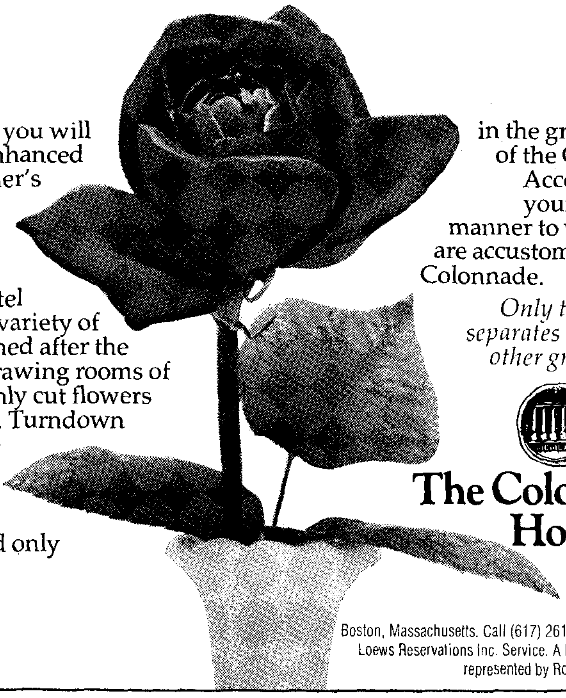

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phrasing and undercut Tatum's fat. Cole was slick in the best way: his effortlessness hid content. (It also hid the fact that by the early fifties, when he made his last piano records, he had easily absorbed the prophecies of Charlie Parker and had become as *modern* a pianist as we then had.) He swung no matter what the tempo, and there was a morning, you've-never-heard-*this*-before freshness about every solo. Even his ballads had a cheerful, diamond quality. Cole recorded mostly for Capitol, which has an abysmal reissue program. Aside from eight trio sides reissued four or five years ago, we have had no Cole piano at all. But now twenty-two radio transcriptions by the trio have been brought out as "Nat King Cole: Early 1940's" on the Mark 56 label (the number is 739). Fourteen have vocals and brief Cole solos, but eight are instrumentals, and they have some jumping moments. Note how Cole states the melody of "Indiana," using a lot of empty space and a back-porch legato approach, and then how he snaps into his improvised chorus. He does the same on "I May Be Wrong," and on the very fast "After You've Gone" he shows off his formidable look-Ma-no-hands technique. There are two Basie numbers—"Lester Leaps In" and "Miss Thing"—that don't quite jell, but "I Can't Give You Anything But Love" is a wonder. Its lazy-bones melodic statement is followed by a passage where he drops in a couple of triplets and a brilliant, dancing double-time figure that take your breath away. Cole was an essential musician, and the gap he left when he pulled out has never closed. —WHITNEY BALLIETT

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NEW ENGLAND FORECASTS
Vermont—Occasional whosers likely Wednesday morning.—*Rutland (Vt.) Herald.*

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MOST FASCINATING NEWS STORY OF THE WEEK

[*The following item, reprinted in its entirety, is from the Halifax (N.S.) Chronicle-Herald*]

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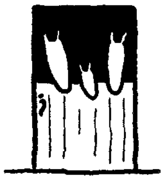
THE RACE TRACK

More About Cauthen



THINGS picked up at Aqueduct last Saturday. The better weather brought out a crowd of 25,625, the largest of the year, who bet $3,669,297 in the tote, and Catalan, Honorable Guest, and Make Amends finished necks apart in the Lucky Draw Stakes. Also, there was quite a flurry over the weekend at the Big A: Steve Cauthen, the sixteen-year-old riding sensation of the season, was in danger of not being able to ride there again until he got his working papers. Two State Labor Department investigators, who preferred to remain nameless, arrived at the track on Saturday morning and began threatening the owners and trainers whose horses Cauthen had ridden with summonses for violating the child-labor laws—employing a boy under eighteen who had no working papers. The affair was quickly settled, and to this old-timer the whole thing seems pretty amusing.

Cauthen had another remarkable week. Starting it at Santa Anita on Sunday, he rode three winners there. Returning to Aqueduct, he had three on Monday, four on Tuesday, four on Wednesday, three on Thursday, three on Friday, and two on Saturday. Since the beginning of the winter season, he has had eighty-nine winners in two hundred and eighty-seven tries, and the prize money earned by the horses he has ridden is more than a million dollars, of which he has received ten per cent. Not bad going for a farm boy from Walton, Kentucky. Unlike some of racing's wunderkinder, Cauthen has done everything right, including getting a good agent, Lenny Goodman—a hustling, cigar-chewing race tracker who has been Baeza's agent for years. Goodman books Cauthen's racing engagements—which is easy, because the boy's services are in great demand—and keeps his racing affairs in order. Also, having been around the race track for a long time, Goodman has a lot to do with picking the horses Cauthen rides, though he says Steve makes the final decision.

THE Santa Anita meeting runs through the first week in April, but this is its big month. There is a race with a purse running into six figures every Sunday, and events that would be headliners elsewhere are scheduled during the week. On February 6th, the Charles H. Strub Stakes was won by Kirby Lane. Last Sunday, Lucie Manet, from Argentina, took the La Cañada Stakes for fillies. This weekend, there's the San Antonio Stakes—the final gallop for the Santa Anita Handicap—and, on February 27th, the Santa Margarita Handicap, a jackpot for fillies and mares. Then, on the first Sunday of March, comes the Big 'Cap, as they call it out there, which has a purse of $250,000. No doubt Kirby Lane will have a go at it. I haven't had a line of odds from Caliente's future book on the race, but I'd guess that he'll be the favorite. His performance in the Strub was a smasher. According to the chart, he was knocked off his stride at the start but recovered quickly, and Hawley, who rode him, steered him through the pack to a good position on the outside not far behind the leaders. Starting his run a furlong or so after he passed the far turn, he swept past Double Discount in the stretch and stood off the challenge of Properantes to win by a nose. They say Hawley, the young Canadian who headed the jockey list last year, deserves full marks for riding with such confidence and judgment. Kirby Lane, bred by the Gedney Farms establishment of Harry Albert, who won the Strub in 1964 with Gunbow (remember him?), is a big handsome gray by Native Charger—a gray son of that gray whirlwind Native Dancer—out of Dancing Puppet, whose sire, Northern Dancer, is a grandson of Native Dancer. That is fairly close inbreeding, but Kirby Lane is not as high-strung as inbred racers usually are. Lazaro Barrera, who won the Belmont Stakes and the Kentucky Derby with a sprinter, Bold Forbes, says, "I know. I trained him just like I trained Bold Forbes." By the way, Kirby Lane ran in one-eyed blinkers in the Strub—blinkers with one of the eye cups closed—to keep him running straight. Pincay, who rode him in the San Fernando Stakes, his windup gallop for the Strub, said that Kirby Lane had tried to bear out during the race and suggested the blinkers to Barrera. The change worked.

HORSEMEN returning from the sixth annual Eclipse Awards dinner in Los Angeles last week say that it was the most notable to date. They were particularly pleased that Jack Dreyfus, former chairman of the board

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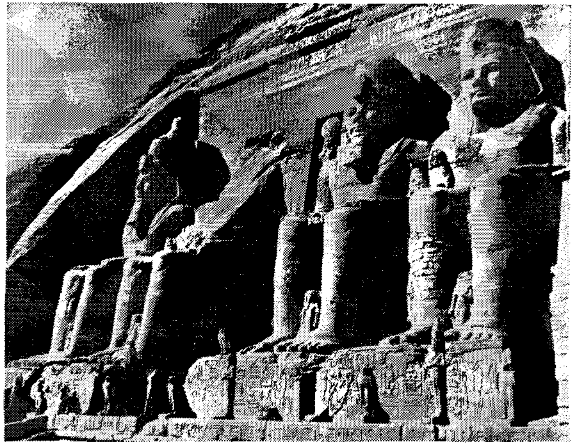

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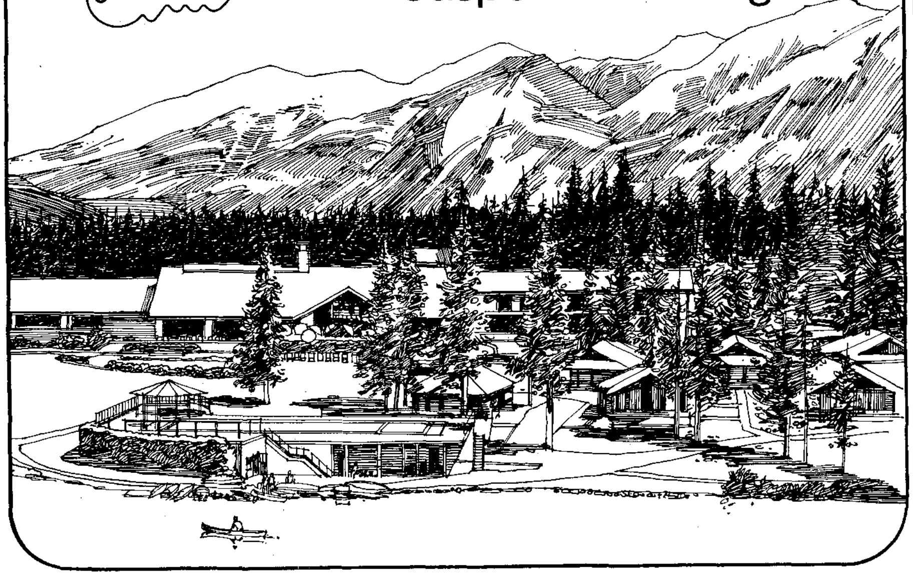

of the New York Racing Association, received the Award of Merit for his continued efforts in behalf of the sport. Mrs. Martha Gerry's Forego was voted Horse of the Year for the third successive time. Other awards went to Mrs. Karen Taylor's Seattle Slew, best two-year-old colt; Mill House's Sensational, best two-year-old filly; Esteban Rodriguez Tizol's Bold Forbes, best three-year-old colt; William Haggin Perry's Revidere, best three-year-old filly; Mrs. Marion du Pont Scott's Proud Delta, best handicap mare; George Weasel, Jr.'s, My Juliet, best sprinter; Nelson Bunker Hunt's Youth, best on grass courses; and Mrs. Ogden Phipps's Straight and True, best steeplechaser. Dan Lasater was, for the third time, named best owner; Nelson Bunker Hunt was best breeder, Laz Barrera was the leading trainer, Sandy Hawley was the leading jockey, and George Martens was best apprentice.

AS you've probably heard, the grandstand of Chicago's Washington Park burned to the ground on the night of the fifth. There had been racing there that afternoon. The fire was discovered several hours after the track closed, and in no time the old building went up in flames like a box of wooden matches. Happily, the old barns across the track, in which about a thousand horses were stabled, escaped the blaze. The management cancelled the meeting, and no plans have been announced for rebuilding. Opened in 1926, Washington Park, where the American Derby was run for years, was a pleasant place to go racing. The last time I was there was for the Nashua-Swaps Match Race, in 1955.

NOMENCLATURE NOTE: The colt by Secretariat out of Charming Alibi—for which a group of Canadians gave a million and a half dollars at the Keeneland sales last summer—has been named Canada Bound. He is wintering in France, where he is being looked after by Maurice Zilber, the trainer for Nelson Bunker Hunt, who bought into the syndicate. —AUDAX MINOR

•

Ozawa eats here, sometimes, and this morning at 11, Dody Goodman joins James Coco's table.

Everyone looks like a New Yorker subscriber, self-assured people who eat bacon in the fingers of their right hand, read the Times in their left.—*Boston Globe.*

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MUSICAL EVENTS

A Peculiar Grace

FRANCIS POULENC'S opera "Dialogues des Carmélites" appeared at La Scala in 1957, swiftly made its way round the world, and is still revived from time to time—most often now, perhaps, in opera schools attracted by the abundance of female roles it offers. There was a production at the New York City Opera in 1966. This month, the Met has taken up the piece, and has done well by it.

In 1794, a group of Carmelite nuns from Compiègne defied the secularization decrees of the Revolution, and went to the scaffold for doing so. One of the community survived, and wrote her memoirs. On them, the Catholic-convert author Gertrud von Le Fort based her novella "Die Letzte am Schafott" (1931), which in somewhat sensational fashion embodies her chosen themes of redemption through suffering and of self-sacrificing love. A movie scenario was prepared from it, and the Catholic writer Georges Bernanos was invited to write the dialogue. The movie wasn't made, but Bernanos' "Dialogues des Carmélites" was published in 1949, the year after his death—the same year that Emmet Lavery's play "Song at the Scaffold," also drawn from the Le Fort novella, was produced in Los Angeles. In Lavery's play, which calls for considerable use of music, the conventual scenes are punctuated by brief mob scenes, and horrors are not avoided: Blanche, the protagonist, is forced to drink from a goblet containing the blood of her slaughtered father. Bernanos' text—which has been staged as a play—is partly movie script and mainly measured dialogue, some of it rather chop-logical:

> "Great trials await you, my daughter."
> "No matter, if God gives me the strength."
> "What He wishes to test in you is not your strength, but your weakness . . ."

And:

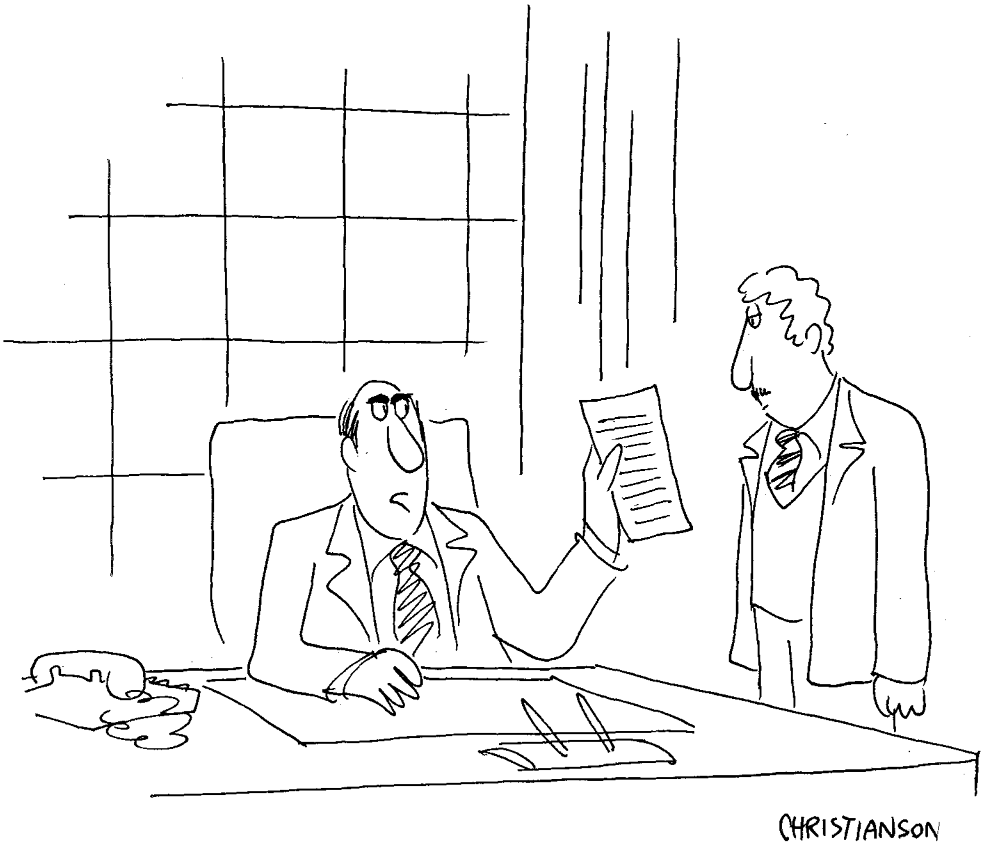
> "You believe me kept here by fear?"
> "Or by fear of fear. That fear, after all, is no more honorable than any other fear. One must know how to risk fear as one risks death, and true courage lies in that risk."

Both works turn on the paradox that Blanche ("I was born in fear, I have lived in it, I live in it still") at the last goes freely and fearlessly to her death on the scaffold, while Mother Marie of the Incarnation, the brave subprioress, who in her zeal for martyrdom has bound all the nuns by vow to seek it, is herself deprived of a martyr's crown. (At the time of the nuns' arrest, she is in Paris, in quest of the fugitive Blanche. Blanche finally rejoins her sisters; Mother Marie is made to understand that her own sacrifice must be to embrace life, not death.)

In the early fifties, Poulenc was commissioned by Ricordi to write a ballet about St. Catherine of Siena, couldn't hit on a suitable scenario, and said he'd prefer to compose an opera for La Scala. Bernanos' "Dialogues" was suggested as a subject, and appealed to him. As a sort of test, he chose the opening words of the prioress, when Blanche first visits the convent:

> Do not believe that this armchair is a privilege of my rank, like the footstool of a duchess! Alas! through charity to my dear daughters, who set great store by it, I wish I could feel at ease in it. But it is not easy to resume old habits too long abandoned, and I see clearly that what should be a pleasure will never again be more than a humiliating necessity for me.

Having chosen that speech, "apparently simple but pregnant with meanings," Poulenc said, "I told myself that if I could succeed in keeping its spirit intact in a musical setting, I would have written the opera." He set it, with a flowing "Moonlight Sonata" figure as accompaniment, to a graceful line that is at once rhythmically patterned and sensitive to natural speech timing. The inflections of the sentences as they might be spoken are widened into lyricism: though the line has the easy spontaneity of "word melody," it spans a surprisingly wide range. When Blanche replies, she, the soprano, does so across smaller intervals than the contralto prioress has used, going less high and less low—one of the many ways in which Poulenc's music throughout the opera delicately limns character and situation. The G-minor harmonic progression is borrowed from "How dark and dreadful is this place," in the cemetery scene of Stravinsky's "The Rake's Progress." The ostinato bass oscillates across a minor third; the finale of the opera is founded on a similar bass, and there its derivation from the opening and close of Stravinsky's "Oedipus Rex" has often been noted. Poulenc inscribed his score "to the memory of my mother, who revealed music to me; of Claude Debussy, who gave me the taste to write some; and of Claudio Monteverdi, Giuseppe Verdi, and Modest Mussorgsky, who served here as my models." The eclecticism is proclaimed; perhaps the name of Franck should be added, of Gounod, of Prokofiev (for the "white-note" opening of the first interlude in Act III, recalling the clois-



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ter scene of "The Fiery Angel," which was performed in Paris in 1954, and for the *marche macabre* that introduces the final scene), and, above all, of Stravinsky, through whom the most Mussorgskian passages (such as the start of Act III, Scene 1) seem to have been filtered, and whose "Symphonies of Wind Instruments" probably suggested the big harmonies near the start of Act II.

Wherever one looks and listens, there is fine, careful working, and other men's devices become Poulenc's own, because they are put to unexpected uses. "Dialogues" is an opera that happens to be about religion; it is not religious music. The composer made it clear that what attracted him to the subject was the passionate vehemence of the characters and the "terrestrial conflict" they wage against fear. He set perhaps a third of Bernanos' text. The characters will not seem rounded to anyone who has not read the whole of it; nor will the subtleties of the character drawing in music be fully apparent. But the dramatic ellipses here provide the sort of check that, in one form or another, Poulenc regularly imposed upon himself. Essentially, he is a romantic and sentimental composer who never quite lets himself go. (It is not a failing, but the source of that ambiguity which gives his music its piquancy and distinctive tone.) In early years, the check was provided by containing impulses within forms and manners of composers less romantic, less sentimental than he was. Then, in his first opera, "Les Mamelles de Tirésias," he could let himself go more freely, within a framework that allowed him a jester's license; it is hard in the exuberant "Tirésias" to tell the ironic from the serious. But when, in the "Dialogues," Mother Marie proposes the vow of martyrdom over a squashy chord sequence that could well be that of a Gershwin song, what are we to make of it? "Disarming simplicity"? David Drew, an acute critic of Poulenc's music, asked the question nearly twenty years ago, and continued with others: "Can we be sure of who is being disarmed, and of what? Is it the sophisticated listener of today, the sophisticated Poulenc of yesterday, the unsophisticated nuns of the story, or the adamant theology of Bernanos' text?" The almost buffo tone of the exchanges between Mother Marie and the officer who comes to expel the nuns from their convent prompts similar questions. And what could be more stagy than the finale: a "Salve Regina" started by fifteen voices, punctuated by the thud of the

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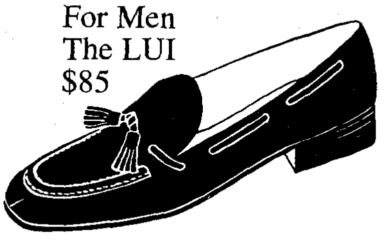

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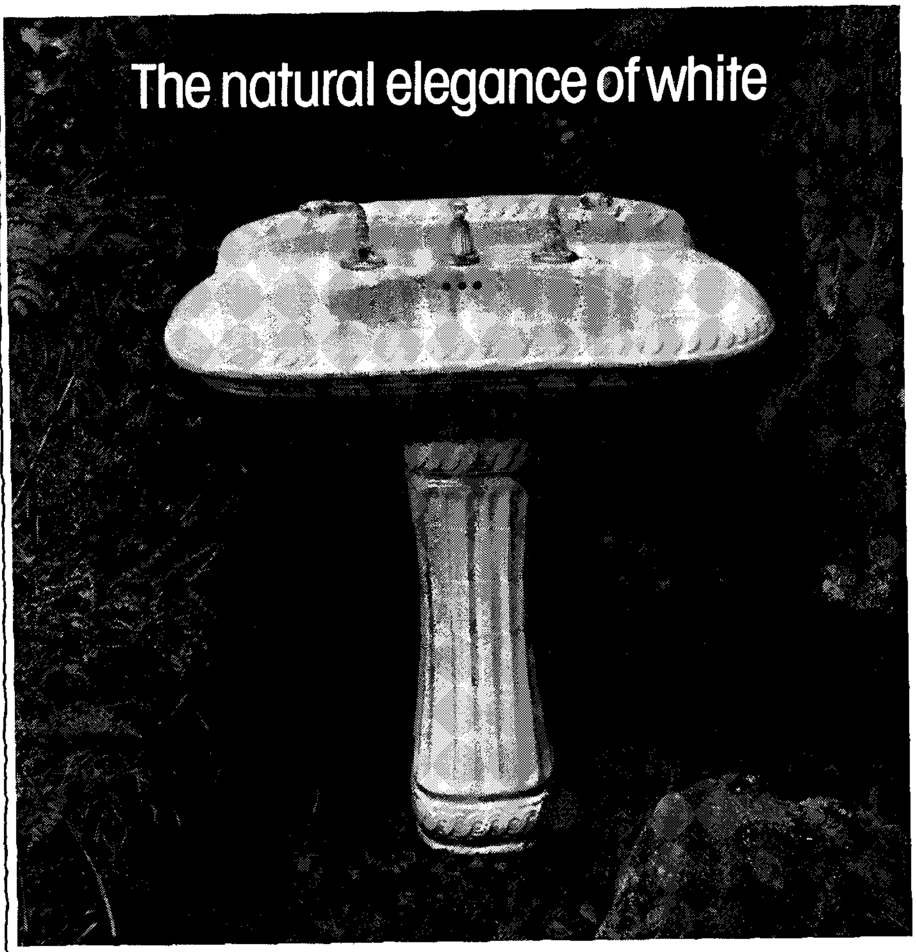
guillotine, and reduced voice by voice until only one is left? Is this a tasteless musical *coup de théâtre* that Puccini might have flinched from? It does not seem so in the theatre. Throughout the "Dialogues," there are tensions between theatricality and reticence, effusion and understatement. Swift surges of emotion are suddenly cut short. Secure in the discipline that his text imposes, Poulenc can indulge in romantic gestures freely; Bernanos insures that they do not get out of control.

POULENC cast his opera in three acts, each of four scenes, some of them divided by "interludes," or brief dialogues played before a drop curtain. The act curtains define three stages in Blanche's quest for a refuge from fear. At the end of Act I, the prioress who received her into the convent dies a "bad," fearful death, almost blaspheming; the convent brings no assurance of spiritual calm. At the end of Act II, revolutionary shouts of "Ça ira" break into the sacristy, and Blanche in alarm drops *le Petit Roi*, a figure of the Christ child, which shatters; her physical safety is threatened even here. At the end of the opera—through some mysterious working of grace—Blanche suddenly conquers her fear and goes steadfastly to a "good" death. This pattern is somewhat obscured in the Metropolitan production, where John Dexter, its director, has reshaped the opera in two acts, each of six scenes. His production is a disciplined and successful essay in what might be termed the post-Piscator or early-Rennert manner—the lean, simple, black-and-white method of staging widely practiced in postwar Germany, when there was not much money available for scenery, and directors made a theatrical virtue of economy, seeking to reduce the "clutter" and trappings of traditionally opulent opera. David Reppa's set for the "Dialogues" is a large black box, with a raked cruciform platform as its floor. Abstracts from what the realistic scenery would be—a fireplace and doorway, the grille of the convent *parloir*, a row of arches sketched in aluminum tubing—drop down to suggest the different localities, and are seconded by Gil Wechsler's deftly accomplished lighting. On the open stage, scene follows scene without a break; Mr. Dexter has invented pantomimes to accompany the instrumental passages that Poulenc composed for the practical purpose of covering scene shifts and the more important musical purpose of varying the dramatic mode by throwing all attention for a while on the orchestra. With increasing fre-



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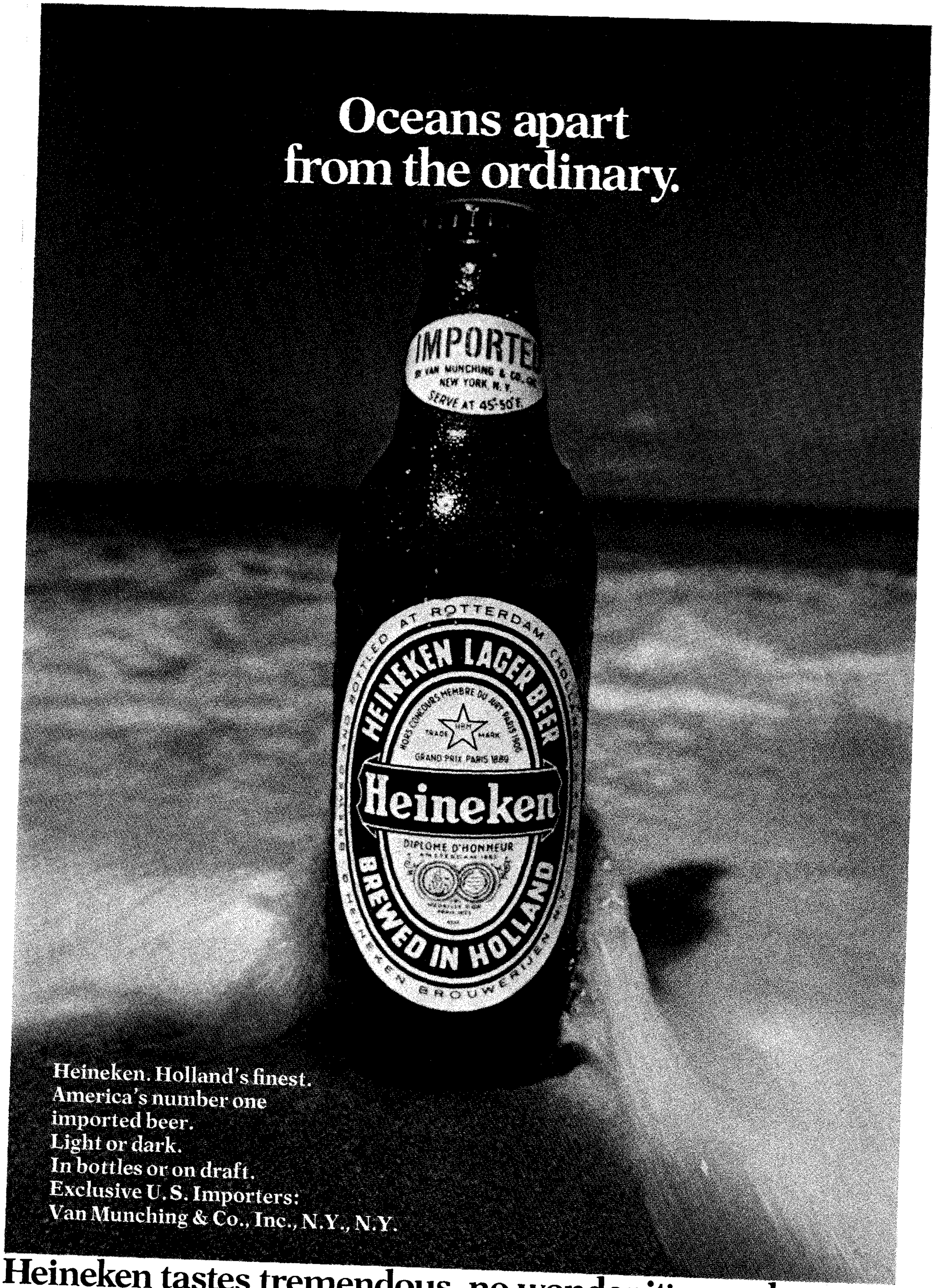
quency, opera directors refuse to allow opera composers to make any of their points unaided: overtures are "choreographed," the "Ring" preludes are turned into action scenes, orchestral interludes are mimed. Mr. Dexter's pantomimes are inoffensive—indeed, rather impressive—examples of the practice, but the listener will probably get a better idea of Poulenc's intention by looking away from the stage and just listening between scenes; the composer's moment for curtain rise can nearly always be heard in the music itself. The staging is lucidly conceived, cleanly and cogently executed. On the first night, something went wrong at the very end: the climactic moment when Blanche steps forward from the crowd to join her companions in death was no more than a vague scuffle at the back of the stage; one critic even had the impression that she went "silently" to her death—whereas the musical point is that, marching to the scaffold, she continues the hymn that, voice by voice, the guillotine has cut short. No doubt this has been put right by now.

The casting of the Met production is almost perverse in that the two principal soprano roles are assigned to mezzos: Maria Ewing is Blanche, and Shirley Verrett is the second prioress (a role Joan Sutherland used to sing). Both of them can get the notes: the question is one not of range but of vocal color. In phrases that call for the clear, floating sound of a soprano we hear the complicated, rich, intense timbre of a mezzo in her upper ranges. The only soprano left us is Sister Constance, latest avatar of the innocent, merry, carefree companion to a troubled heroine. (Aennchen in "Der Freischütz," Sophie in "Werther," and Barbara in "Kat'a Kabanová" are among her ancestors.) Betsy Norden sang the part prettily, even if her tone was a shade thin. Miss Ewing's Blanche was touching, and surely sung. The portrayal of outward composure broken by sudden, uncontrolled surrender to the promptings of her constant inner fear was skillfully achieved. She did not quite solve the problem that Poulenc, largely by his abridgment of the Bernanos text, had set her: revealing to us why the tiresome, selfish girl should be the object of so much loving care from the two prioresses and Mother Marie and Sister Constance.

In an otherwise very consistent, integrated production, Miss Verrett alone seemed to have resisted the force of Mr. Dexter's harmonizing hand. There was almost a touch of Josephine Baker in her portrayal of a nun. (She crossed herself not naturally but with high operatic flamboyance.) The point about the second prioress is that she is a strong woman of sound common sense, not prey to the passions that flare both in her predecessor and in Mother Marie; and, unlike them, she is a bourgeoise—a cattle dealer's daughter—not an aristocrat. Her two solos are the closest things to arias to be found in the "Dialogues." Miss Verrett sang them in lustrous timbres but did not make much of the words. (All that I caught in the first piece was the phrase "many kinds of porridge;" that can't be right.) The opera was done in Joseph Machlis's English version, which is fluent and musical (even if here and there a fellow-translator itched to tinker with details of inflection) but calls for singers ready to adjust the strict musical notation to English stresses. From this point of view, it was the Frenchwoman in the cast, Régine Crespin, as the first prioress, who provided a model of how to sing English words on the operatic stage. Each vowel was given its distinct color. Metre was modified by sense. The words were laid along the music, or vice versa, with the mastery of someone who knows how to declaim. There was none of the unnaturalness that, for example, William Dooley, as Blanche's father, brought to such a phrase as "when wine is plen-ti-ful and cheap" by giving each syllable the same length and weight. Mme. Crespin, who played the second prioress at the Paris première of the "Dialogues," in 1957, and does so in the Angel recording of the opera, was in her new role most powerful, dramatic, and affecting. So was Mignon Dunn in the role of Mother Marie. In a subtly controlled portrayal, by a stance, a gesture, a glance, a telling verbal emphasis, she revealed in detail the proud subprioress's feelings about her successive superiors, about Blanche, about her own duties as a Carmelite. Mother Marie is in effect the tragic heroine of the tale. Miss Dunn's performance was of the kind that made not only her own role but everyone else's more vivid.

Michel Plasson conducted, admirably, as a supple interpreter of Poulenc's phrases, quick to reveal the expressive colors of the orchestral writing, and as an accompanist who refused to allow his players to drown the voices. His blend of delicacy, reticence, and sudden, full-throated emotion, of sentiment tempered by discretion, of charm and intelligence combined, was exactly what Poulenc's score requires.

—ANDREW PORTER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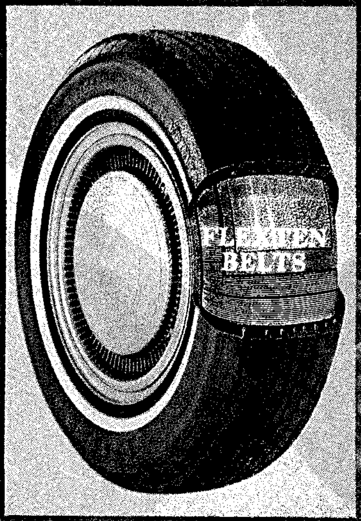

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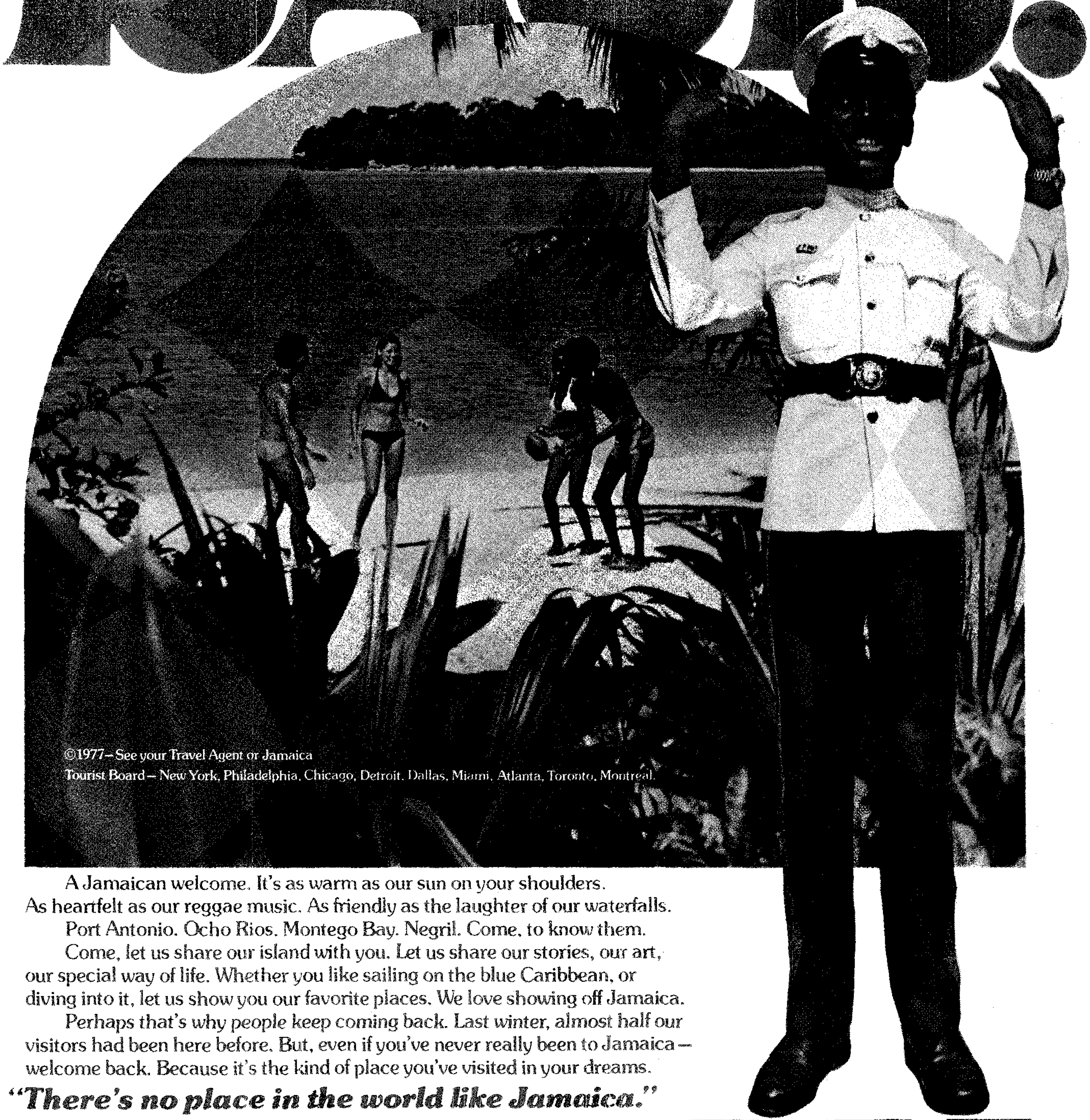

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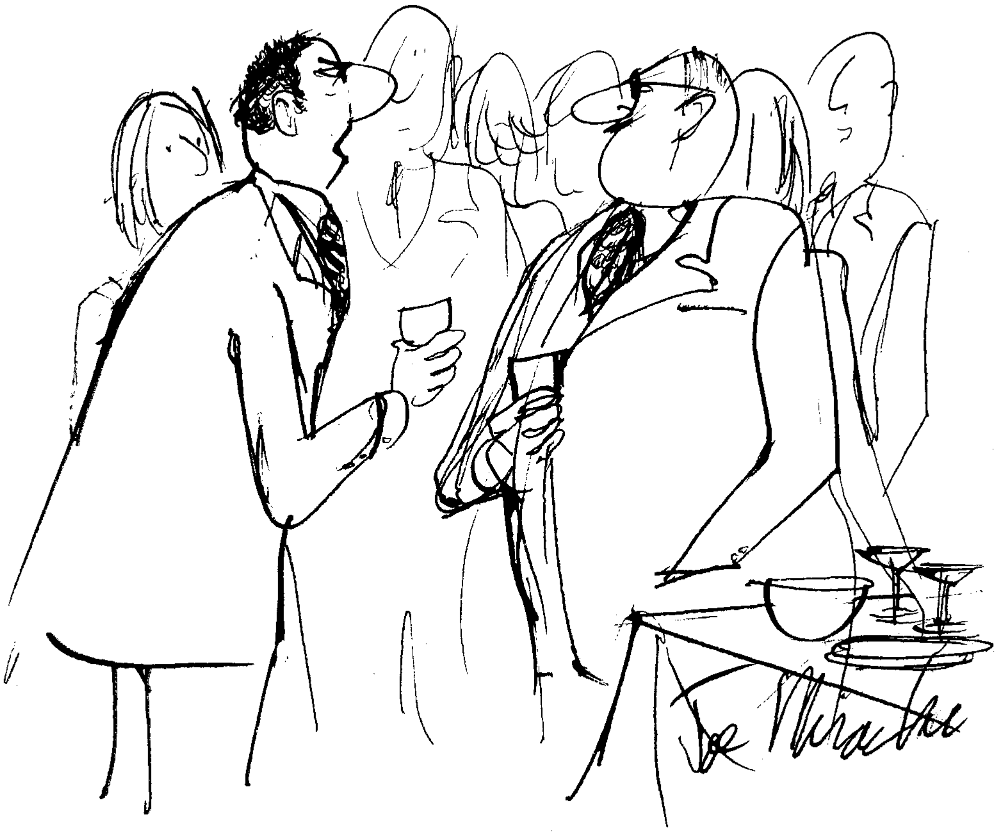
GLENDA JACKSON's claws always show. In her performance as Alexandra, the patrician nun of "Nasty Habits," those claws and her hard, amused eyes reveal the wolf disguised as Red Riding Hood's grandmother. Since "Nasty Habits" is the film version of Muriel Spark's 1974 novel "The Abbess of Crewe," the Watergate travesty set in a convent, and Alexandra represents Nixon, this flash of the wolf inside the nun's clothing gives her imperiousness a mythic edge. Alexandra, a woman with the idée fixe that she must be elected abbess—that it was for this that she was born—is never a mere villainess. She's a sacred monster, a romantic authoritarian, rather like Mrs. Spark's Miss Jean Brodie, but far more intelligent and regal. Alexandra moves, the author tells us, "like a Maharajah aloft on his elephant."

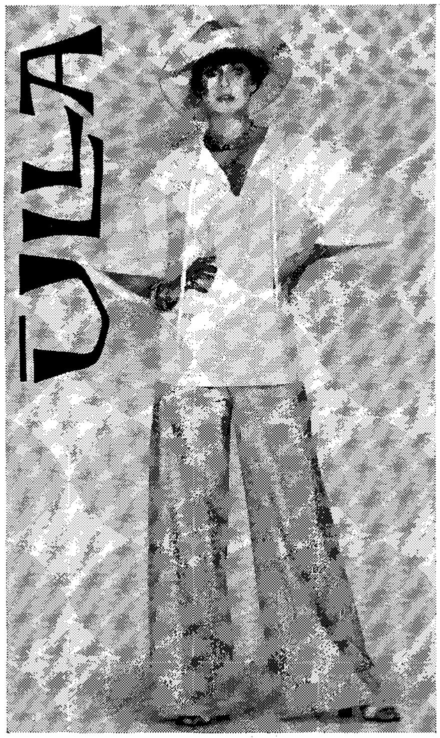
With Glenda Jackson's normal biting delivery—her almost vengeful enunciation—softened by unctuousness, and her pared-down, abrupt manner smoothed by the needs of campaigning for office, Alexandra is the compleat hypocrite, her malice and intensity kept in check. Addressing the assembled nuns or the television public, she has a connoisseur's ear for her own gift of language: she regards her articulateness as a mark of natural superiority. She believes in nothing but herself and appreciates her own refinement and aplomb. In Alexandra, snobbery achieves perfection.

Except for the title, there is little that is gross about "Nasty Habits," directed by Michael Lindsay-Hogg from a screenplay by the producer Robert Enders, who retains much of Mrs. Spark's dialogue. The film is set in Philadelphia (though most of the footage was shot in England, using an actual convent near the Elstree studios). At the start, the old abbess (Edith Evans) dies, and in a few weeks the nuns are to elect her successor. The arch-conservative Alexandra tells her minions Walburga and Mildred (Geraldine Page and Anne Jackson) that they must discredit Felicity (Susan Penhaligon), the liberal challenger. They arrange with Jesuits from a nearby seminary to send a couple of novices to break in and steal Felicity's love letters, which are kept in her sewing box. The first night that the novices break in, they are frightened off before they obtain the letters, but they take a thimble to prove to their superiors that they made the entry. Felicity discovers its loss, and when they return the next night, she locks them in and calls the police. Alexandra manages to keep the lid down and is elected by a landslide, but she's blackmailed by the burglars, and Felicity takes her case to the public and creates a scandal.

Having bugged the convent, and even the poplars on the grounds, Alexandra and her Haldeman and Ehrlichman—Walburga and Mildred—try to clear themselves by putting the blame on their patsy, Winifred, their own John Dean (Sandy Dennis). The conception does not require that the actresses impersonate the Watergate troupe. It's a comic bonus that Sandy Dennis, wearing big, round specs and grinning like a rabbit, isn't just a cartoon of John Dean smiling—she's John Dean crossed with Amy Carter. In the book, Winifred is described as speaking "in her whine of bewilderment, that voice of the very stupid, the mind where no dawn breaks," and Sandy Dennis turns blurting into woozy slapstick. Her Winifred has never learned how to modulate—she is always louder than anyone else, and her tactless remarks come crashing through the air, dislocating Alexandra's sensibilities. How can Alexandra maintain her aloofness from the coverup when Winifred forgets to be covert and belts out details, while calling her Alexandr*ia*, to boot? When Sandy Dennis appeared in "The Out-of-Towners," she rang so many sad-sack variations on "Oh, my God" that it was apparent that the movies had been wasting her in snivelling, suffering roles. This is her first real crack at screen farce, and she parodies her own mannerisms. It's bliss watching her—the same kind of bliss one feels each time Jack Gilford or Bob Dishy comes onstage in "Sly Fox." Winifred the sneak, pulling down her upper lip in order to think, is a transsexual Uriah Heep. She doesn't walk, she teeters. When she dresses up in her idea of civvies—platform soles, short skirts, and Shocking-pink pantyhose—in order to make a payoff to the blackmailing Jesuit novices in the ladies' lavatory at Wanamaker's, or disguises herself as a man in order to make a payoff in the men's lavatory at Independence Square, she's such a drip she's creepy. As Sandy Dennis plays her, she's a feminine version of a Shakespearean fool—her stupidity is a form of enchantment. This movie has a great batch of braying fools and clowns, and with Rip Torn turning up for a bit as a Jesuit it even has a satyr. At its best—high wit and inspired silliness—"Nasty Habits" sug-



"Look here, Brentwell, stop dropping a name every time I drop a name!"



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gests a Midsummer Night's Dream of Watergate.

The nuns group together, forming pretty patterns; with each one framed by her coif and habit, their comings and goings have a Book of Hours ceremoniousness. They circle around Alexandra, her willfulness magnetizing them. The Watergate plot could be set in almost any bureaucratic institution, but putting it in a convent has the burlesque advantage of the sex transposition: not only do we have women playing power games but we get to see nuns, in their austere draperies—enclosed in sanctity—reveal their crass thoughts. Alexandra and Walburga and Mildred look serene among the other nuns; when they talk among themselves, their words are toads jumping out of their lovely mouths. Venting their hatred of Felicity and her supporters, or making jokes about their own flunky, Winifred, they're a coiffed little wolf pack. Anne Jackson's Mildred sails into a room, smiling beatifically—the Madonna as contented matron—and then speaks out of the corner of her mouth like a ward heeler chewing on a cold cigar.

Most movies that lift stylized dialogue straight from a novel become arch and awful, but this cracked-crystal surface comes close to matching the tart chastity of Mrs. Spark's prose. Contemptuous of Felicity's bourgeois sewing box, Alexandra speaks of the stolen thimble with withering arrogance. When she speculates, "If the thimble was a symbol," there's a bit of the hypercivilized impishness of Bea Lillie's "You will find the dinghy by the jetty" in "On Approval"—a movie that "Nasty Habits," in its heraldic camp, somewhat resembles. There is just one episode taken from the book that doesn't play. Alexandra recites a tediously long list of words that Felicity has used in her bill of particulars against the tyranny in the convent; the scene is too writery—it's an author's equivalent of an actress's demonstrating her powers by reading the telephone directory aloud. Except for this, the movie wobbles only when it employs more naturalistic speech, and it loses its visual tone then, too.

The novel itself is cryptic and very slight, even though it is padded with a running series of long-distance phone conversations between Alexandra and the Abbey's plenipotentiary missionary nun, the Kissinger figure (played by Melina Mercouri, who apparently qualifies by the timbre of her voice and the thickness of her accent—it can't be for her acting). The book doesn't give

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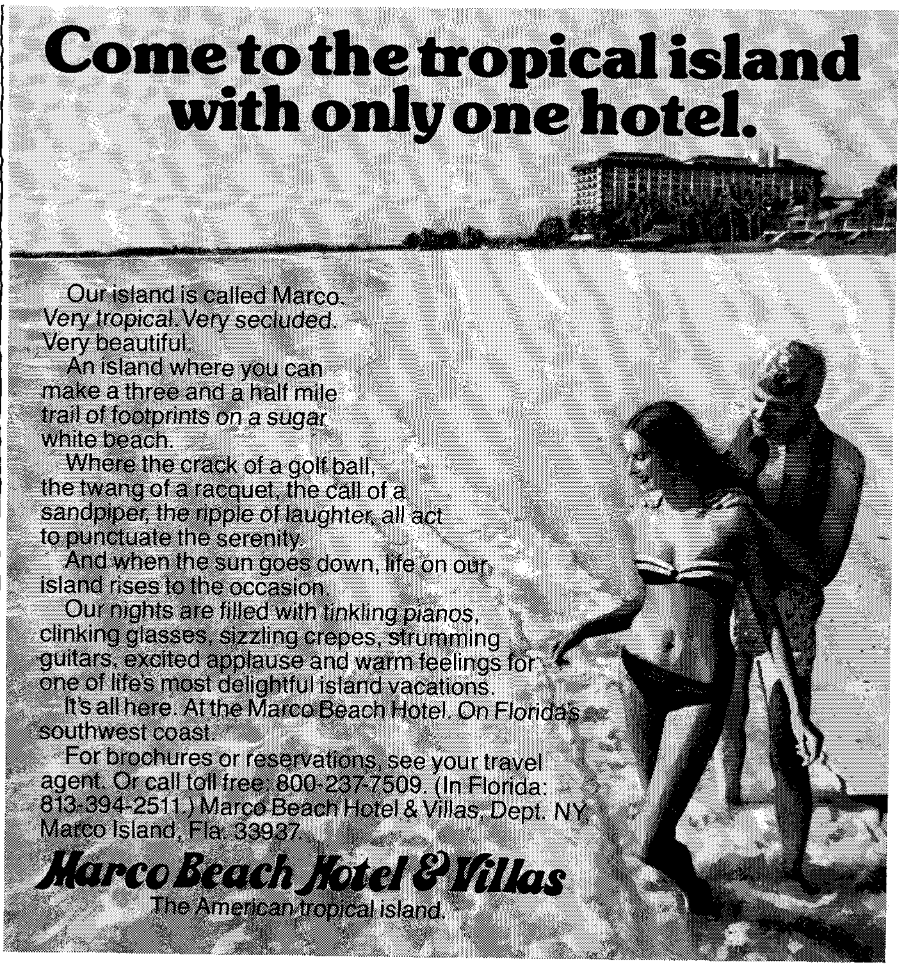
the film quite enough to draw upon, and though the scenarist has added a Gerald Ford figure—Geraldine, played by Anne Meara—he leaves her on the sidelines. Even without much in the way of dialogue, Anne Meara combines the brassy, gum-chewing delivery of the wisecracking gold diggers of the thirties with the expressive gestures of a top banana. Everything she does is funny. The other additions are mostly dramatic filler, and Enders' interpolated lines don't have the sureness of Mrs. Spark's cadences. A couple of added scenes featuring Eli Wallach as a monsignor in Rome are transparently designed to placate Catholics by suggesting that the Abbey, which is "quasi-Benedictine" and "quasi-Jesuit," isn't under the control of the Vatican. And there are some street scenes of Felicity handing out leaflets and soliciting public support that lack the finesse of Douglas Slocombe's cinematography in the soft-lighted convent, with its formal walks and ornamental enclosures.

Right at the center of the material there's a quirk. Somewhere between Muriel Spark's conceiving this satire of Watergate and completing it, she developed a crush on her prime creation, and Alexandra became a living work of art, who "stands like the masthead of an ancient ship." Alexandra began to represent Muriel Spark herself—an ascetic romantic, drawn to the preservation of forms. And since the author shares Alexandra's contempt for Felicity's innocence—for her attacks on materialism and her campaign for a "love abbey"—she saw no need for a paranoid flaw in Alexandra's character. Nixon may have been Mrs. Spark's starting point, and Watergate the device for her plot, but Alexandra eventually becomes the culmination of centuries of very grand breeding, her monarchical values enshrined even while her clique is being satirized for its bungling.

Alexandra loathes Felicity's do-goodism; she sees Felicity as a weakling, a worm for squishing. But Alexandra isn't maniacal enough, or even insecure enough, to feel threatened by Felicity's revolutionary followers. She is above fear. Alexandra is so lofty that the forces are never joined in battle, and Susan Penhaligon's Felicity doesn't come across as a character. One could say the same thing of McGovern, but Felicity doesn't come across even as a nebulous character. She's just a smudged-face flower child, so ordinary she's hardly worthy of Alexandra's gibes at her commonness. We expect a final clarity, some whopping irony—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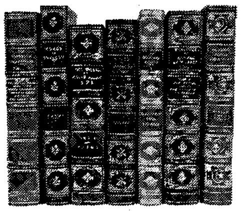

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Felicity's triumph and the recognition that Alexandra's wolfishness brought it about—and we don't get it, partly because the author couldn't bear to degrade Alexandra by making fun of her. So toward the close, when the film uses lines derived from Nixon himself, it seems to be falling back on Watergate. Ideally, the movie should have the structure to stand as a travesty of convent life, independent of the Watergate burlesque. It doesn't, quite—it tapers off toward topicality and obviousness, and the end seems premature. This movie goes by all too quickly. The actresses seem to be warming up—and the show is over.

Despite his name, the thirty-six-year-old director, Michael Lindsay-Hogg, is American (though he also has Irish citizenship, via his mother, Geraldine Fitzgerald). He began in the theatre as an actor, then ran a small-town stock company (with Peter Bogdanovich) in upstate New York in 1961, and from there went to Ireland to work in TV and the theatre, and then to England, where he did promotional films for the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, and directed TV plays by Simon Gray and Trevor Griffiths. This is only his second feature; his first was the 1970 Beatles documentary, "Let It Be." This film might be low comedy burdened with rarefied dialogue if it weren't for the balmy gracefulness of his comic tableaux and the measured flow of clipped language, which at times calls up Evelyn Waugh. Other satires of Nixon have hustled their own political pieties, and they've pointed up his lower-middle-class tone for the derision of counterculture audiences. The serious "All the President's Men" was poisonously mediocre and, finally, a celebration of the journalistic benefits of having an informer tucked away in a garage. But even those who voted for Nixon may be able to laugh at "Nasty Habits," because it has a midsummer madness about it. Simpleminded satires usually make the points they set out to make; the satires that are truly funny often don't. Their authors' feelings come through and gum things up. That isn't a problem, it's a paradox. And, as we're told in "Nasty Habits," "a paradox you live with." In this case, happily. —PAULINE KAEL

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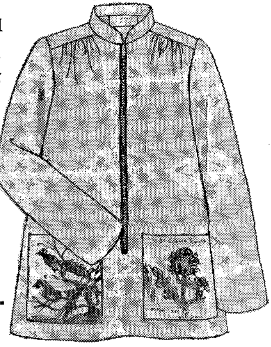

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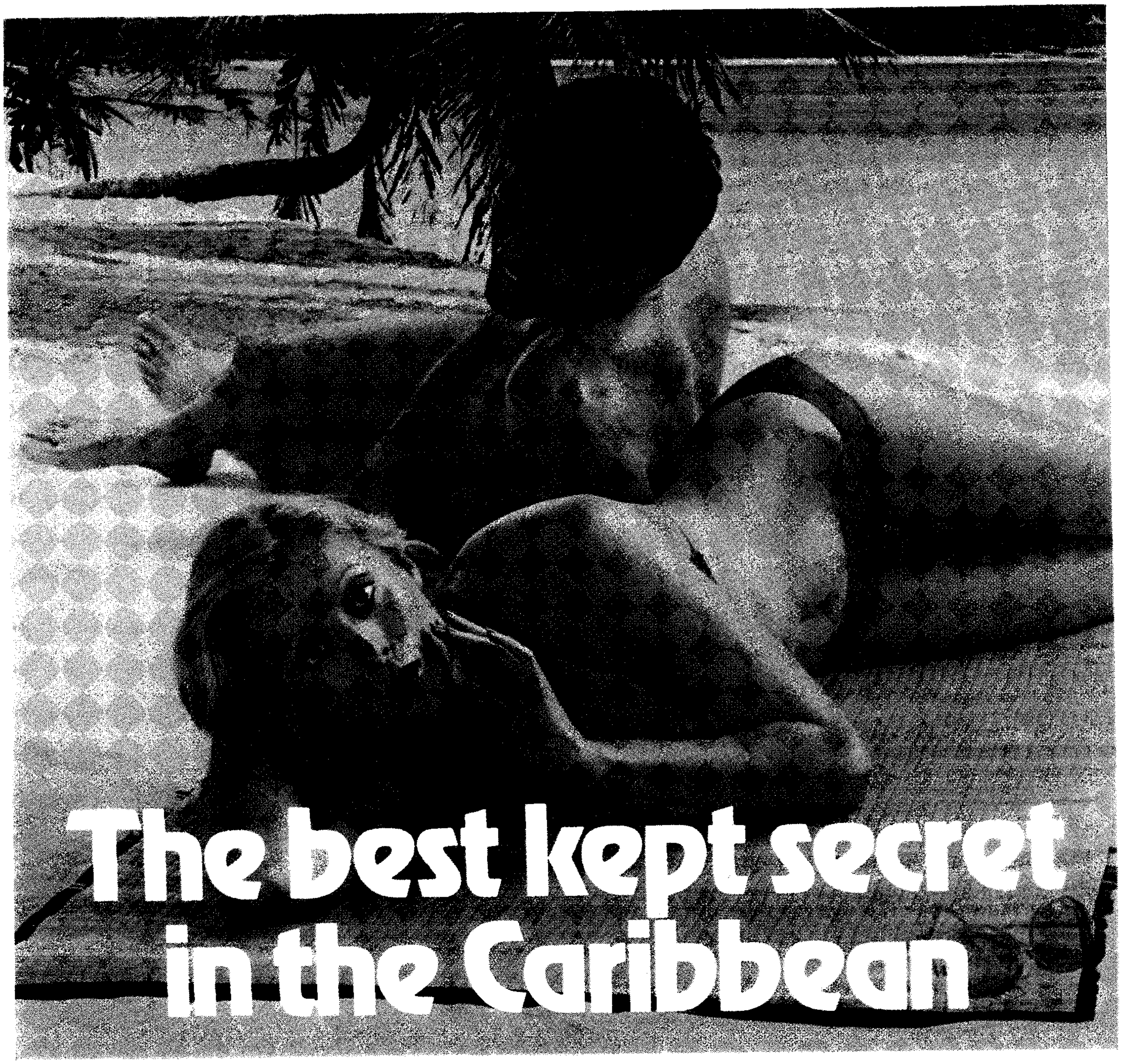

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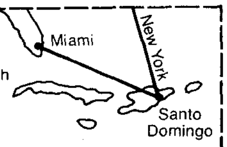

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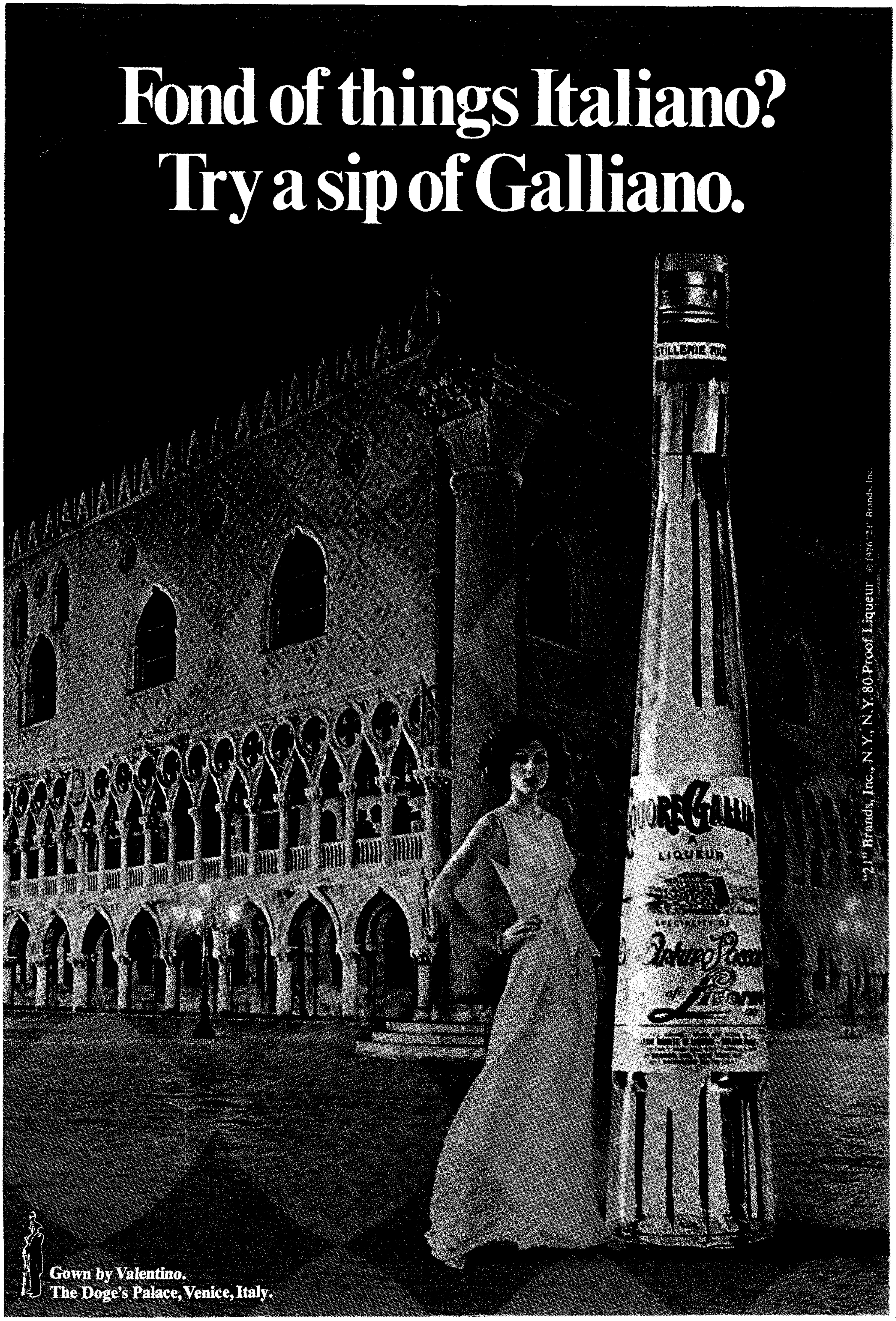
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BOOKS

Gaiety in the Galleries

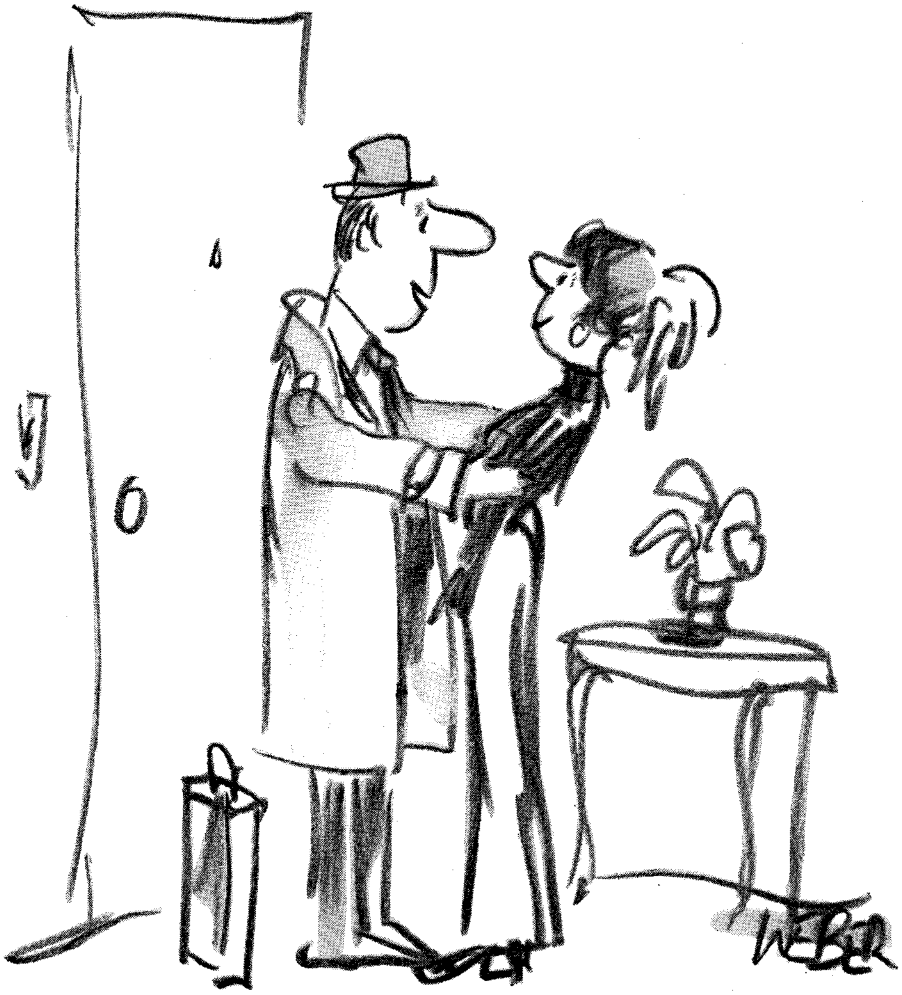
UNDER the snappy title “Art and Act” (Harper & Row), Peter Gay has marshalled, his subtitle tells us, considerations “On Causes in History.” The historical events he has chosen to examine, however, surprise us by being not battles or conferences but artists: Manet, Gropius, and Mondrian. His closely worded introduction states, “To analyze the structure of historical causation by means of those who paint pictures and design houses rather than those who lie for money or kill for glory was to affirm what I have called the essential unity of historical reality and the unity of method that underlies the diversity of historical investigation.” What has caused this particular analysis and affirmation—what has caused, that is, “Art and Act”—appears to be this: a historian, Mr. Gay, famous for his studies of the Enlightenment and lately with the problem of historical causation much on his mind, was invited to give a series of lectures at an art school, the Cooper Union. To say that Mr. Gay acquitted himself brilliantly is to admit that the case called for acquittal; in order “to deal with art as a piece of history,” as the introduction puts it, Mr. Gay had to make himself into an art historian, for an audience of art students. The prodigious bibliography (three hundred and forty-two titles for a text of two hundred and twenty-eight pages) indicates how assiduously he worked to supplement his already wide erudition. Unlike Mr. Gay’s previous set of bound lectures, “Style in History,” “Art and Act” offers us no illuminations offhand. What the historian imparts to us of Manet, Gropius, and Mondrian he has set himself to learn, and the schizophrenic split of so many pages between the text and an anxious abundance of footnotes betrays a certain effortfulness. The prose rarely relaxes, as so often in “Style in History,” into a droll simile (of Macaulay: “Much like a provincial hotel keeper of the old days, he constantly reappears to ask if everything is satisfactory”) or a superbly confident simplification (of Ranke’s historiography: “Power, then, is the march of God through the world”).

Mr. Gay’s careful exercise, in the Cooper Union lectures, of his momentary “license to concentrate on art professionally” invites the reader to share with the historian “the interest of the search and the exhilaration of discovery.” We all have seen pictures by Manet and Mondrian, we all harbor some dim image of the Bauhaus and its products; eagerly we sally forth, thus brightly, scantly equipped, to beard Historical Cause in its Platonic den. It cannot be said that Mr. Gay encourages Platonic hopes. At the outset, he is discouragingly Aristotelian, pluralistic, circumspect: “I have . . . written these chapters to argue that every historical event has several causes, and several types of causes, and that our capacity to predict which causal hierarchy will eventually emerge is strictly circumscribed.” All events, he tells us, are, in Freud’s word, overdetermined; the Marxists to the contrary, historical science will uncover no formulas as beautifully reductive as Newton’s or Einstein’s physical laws. What may be ventured, in the matter of schematization, is a tripartite division of causes into immediate “releasers,” short-range determinants, and long-range causes, and a comparable division of “worlds” (“Man lives in several worlds at once, each of them capable of supplying causes”) into culture, craft, and the private sphere. Historians traditionally have searched the first realm for their significances, but the second and third matter—conspicuously so for artistic events. The world of craft inspires one of Gay’s best sentences:

> For most human beings, work, its possibilities and its frustrations, engrosses the foreground of existence, permeating their fundamental attitudes of hope, patience, rebelliousness, or despair, and invading on one side the public world of culture and, on the other, the intimate world of private life.

And contemplation of the private world, that of man’s “family and his inner life,” leads Gay to urge psychology upon historians:

> The subjective dimension can never be far from the mind of the historian at work. . . . There is some repression in all social relations, some projection in all political activity, some sublimation in all aesthetic enterprise. The fantasies of politicians are historical material quite as much as their economic stakes and their ideals; in fact, their stakes and their ideals derive their shape largely from



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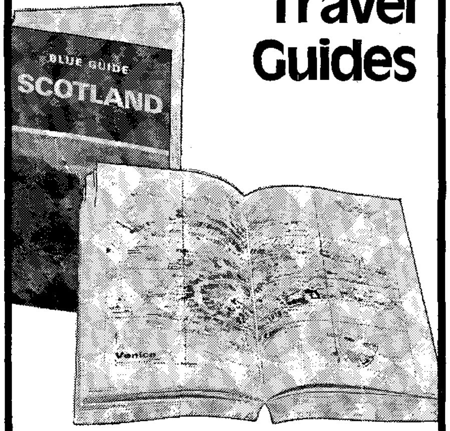

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> their fantasies.... The springs of action that are invisible are often more consequential than those that parade their power.... Therefore, in ways that historians have not yet fully grasped, all history must be in significant measure psychohistory.

The three "worlds of reality" have their internalized counterparts in "worlds of perception," as follows: culture/ideologies; craft/traditions; privacy/defenses. With the courage of his triadism, Mr. Gay then discusses his three subjects in three chapters triply subdivided, pursuing each artist through each world and finding Manet to demonstrate "The Primacy of Culture," Gropius "The Imperatives of Craft," and Mondrian "The Claims of Privacy." The scheme is scholastic in its rigor, but the rigor is lightened by the sheer interest and wit of Mr. Gay's many facts, observations, and correlations; and, as with any art book, one can always look ahead at the plates and try to imagine what will be said about them. The plates, by the way, are rather dinky, and black-and-white; the grayness does small harm to Gropius, but Manet and Mondrian without color are the merest shadows of themselves.

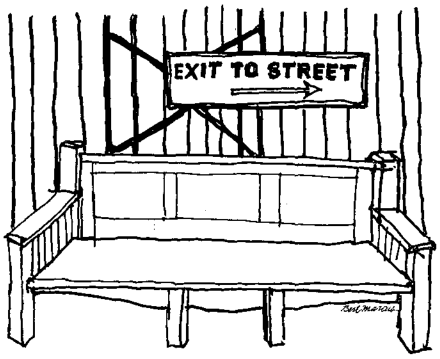
The section on Gropius is the least exceptional, and amounts to a prescription for good architecture. "For Gropius, in short, the architect's obligation never changed. It was in the twentieth century A.D. what it had been in the fifth century B.C.—to make buildings that one could live in." Gropius is quoted in German—"*Das Bauhaus ist zum Bauen da!*" ("The Bauhaus exists for building!")—and in English: "Design is a consistent, step-by-step process in which all functions are harmonized, the psychological as well as the practical ones." The architect's acknowledgment of "the multiplicity of motives" nicely complements the historian's theme of multiple causation; Gropius is not, Gay emphasizes, Mies van der Rohe, who amiably decreed, "I think we should treat our clients as children." From the Bauhaus complex itself and the radically innovative Fagus shoe-last factory, of 1911, to the Pan Am Building and his own house at Lincoln, Massachusetts, Gropius has attended to the client's needs and blended them with his own intuitions. Functionalism, in its founder's application, is "strikingly elastic." Mr. Gay, as much at home in German culture as in French, conducts a tour of the Berlin in which the young Gropius absorbed his first impressions of the architect's craft. The city in the years before 1914 was both "a chamber of horrors to study and to flee"—the bristling overblown monuments erected by the second Kaiser Wilhelm to honor the first—and "a museum of models to admire," including some timid beginnings of modernism and the ingenious neoclassic structures of Karl Friedrich Schinkel. The historian employs terms like "prophetic spatial intuitions" with an engaging verve; the illustrative plates of old Berlin are the most amusing in the book, and the best served by the halftone reproduction. Our pleasantly gray impression of Gropius well suits the figure chosen to represent craftsmanship.

The curious bracketing of "privacy" and "defenses" seems made for the Mondrian chapter, a vivid piece of psycho-art-history. After sketching the cultural and craftsmanly background of Mondrian's breakthrough into abstract painting, and dealing somewhat gingerly with his theosophical beliefs, Mr. Gay focusses on the artist's private repressions. "His art is an art of exclusion, an elaborate ritual to evade invasions of privacy. . . . The inexpressiveness of Mondrian's art has its own eloquence; it is expressive of Mondrian's character." Mr. Gay finds just enough in Mondrian's life—his bachelorhood, his stark studios, his "personal fetish" of adopting the customs of whatever country he found himself in, his "almost maniacal fear of injuring his eyes"—to give convincing weight to this analysis:

> No sentiment, no curves, no touching—that is how he lived and that is what his paintings proclaim. He, like his art, was full of emotions; the equilibrium for which he groped with such patience, such inventiveness, and such needy anxiety was anything but static. It was, as he himself insisted, dynamic, even if that dynamism had origins of which he was unaware. His paintings offer impressive evidence just how much beauty the talented can wrest from fear.

Art criticism like this builds itself into a reader's perceptions; Mondrian's canvases will never after look, quite, the same.

The Manet chapter appears to me the most problematical. Each of Gay's chapters defines itself against a miscon-



ption, an oversimplification, that ex- ts, he implies, within received opinion. ondrian's art is less metaphysical than e thought, Gropius's architecture less unctional. Manet, he seems to say, is ss a modernist than has been claimed:

> Manet simply does not fit into the nterpretation of modernism that domi- ates in our day. That interpretation sees great transvaluation of values begin- ing, roughly, with the Impressionists and ending, roughly, with the Surrealists, as the impassioned protest of civilized artists and thinkers against the mechanization, the ugliness, the rootlessness, the sheer vulgarity of technological mass civilization. Modernism, in this view, is the hatred of the modern world, the rebellion of culture against culture.

Mr. Gay blows this straw man over with the revelation that a cloud of railroad steam is included in a lovely Manet painting of 1873. Who, really, has said that modernism comprises hatred of the modern world? The modernist classics by Joyce and Proust celebrate the world the authors knew, with a directness and even a naïveté previously reserved for poetry. "Ulysses" embraces cinematic technique; Proust pens homages to such modern inventions as the railroad, the telephone, the airplane. "Technological mass civilization" fascinates as much as it repels, and from Léger to Claes Oldenburg has entertained nuncios from the world of art. Art, in that it sets before us something not there before, is positive, and, in that it cannot much change the world around it, permissive. Art fuelled on distaste will not run long. Manet was of his times, and cheerfully so. What *has* been said, I believe, is that his painting, for all its traditional vestiges and natural sunniness, marks a departure, a shift in the center of gravity, as definite, though as subtle, as the fiction of Stendhal. André Malraux, with a flamboyance that need not always be suspect, declaimed in "The Voices of Silence":

> Manet's contribution, not superior but radically different, is the green of *The Balcony*, the pink patch of the wrap in *Olympia*, the touch of red behind the black bodice in the small *Bar des Folies-Bergère*. . . . [They] are obviously color-patches signifying nothing except color. Here the picture, whose background had been hitherto a recession, becomes a surface, and this surface becomes not merely an end in itself but the picture's *raison d'être*. Delacroix's sketches, even the boldest, never went beyond dramatizations; Manet (in some of his canvases) treats the world as—uniquely—the stuff of pictures.

Mr. Gay briefly cites this passage, and sniffs, "Certainly Manet was something of a *tachiste*—a passionate painter

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of colored patches—who permitted his subjectivity a prominent share in his aesthetic decisions. . . . Yet there is more to Manet's art, and to his modernism, than his kind of impulsive subjectivity." Here the historian risks becoming merely corrective and letting history become no more than a web of fussy qualifications. His concluding postscript states, "The vastly complicated intersection of potentialities pressing toward the actuality of the historical event is so richly textured that it seems almost impossible to disentangle, even with hindsight." This is a protestation rather than a proposition. Malraux's point about the patches of color offers a perspective, a thread through the tangle; he performs a historian's task by locating the *historic moment.* Manet in 1881, painting a bar girl at the Folies-Bergère, dabs in some red without a representational excuse; Gropius in 1911, designing a shoe-last factory, leaves out a corner support and joins two planes of glass at a right angle; Mondrian around 1914 (it is characteristic of artistic events to be chronologically elusive) covers a canvas with no more than vertical and horizontal lines—such are the "acts" that Mr. Gay promises to distinguish in his title, and that he all but loses within the infinite multiplicity and interrelatedness of historical circumstance. It is good, useful, and entertaining to know that Manet continued to consult his Academic master Couture and that he enjoyed strolling the new boulevards that Baron Haussmann had cut through Paris; but this is not why Manet is historic. Malraux attempts to tell us why, and though, as Mr. Gay reveals in "Style in History," any history is to some extent stylized, the attempt must be made. Otherwise, the nightmare of medieval nominalism is upon us again, and by a kind of Zeno's paradox of infinite factual subdivision the Achilles of understanding can never overtake the gargantuan tortoise of reality.

In the history of art, we might venture another paradox: history must forget itself to happen. If, with what meagre historical imagination we have, we seize Manet in the first moment that he daubed on paint purely for the painting's sake, or Mondrian or Gropius or Giotto or Pollock in his breakthrough moment, we feel in each act not only a plenitude (ambition, intuition, expertise, delight, etc.) but an absence—a void that belongs to these creative acts. *Nothing is preventing them.* The technical and cultural inhibitions that for centuries barred a way have evaporated. "Why not?" is the most potent

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question an artist can ask himself; in the fabric of aesthetic imperatives, holes develop and wait undiscovered until a spirit sufficiently reckless or driven presses through them. Malraux's willingness to highlight—to put his intellectual chips upon—Manet's little "color-patches" helps define modern art and casts light backward on what Mr. Gay never mentions but what must strike any viewer of Manet's historical and theatrical tableaux: their utter, comical deadness. Assemblages like "The Execution of Emperor Maximilian" and "Ballet Espagñol" have cogwheels but don't turn; they are stopped clocks. The figures in the ambitious early canvases like "The Old Musician" and the famous "Déjeuner sur l'Herbe" look pasted-on; with an eerie air of mutual dissociation and an impudent outward gaze that might be the painter's, they float in a slippery, deliberately unreal space. Academism had to die in Manet before Impressionism could be born. This death, this drying up, is itself a cause. The philistines rightly say that Pollock dribbled because he couldn't draw. He couldn't draw in the same way that Manet couldn't lend conviction to his dramatic tableaux: the socially derived energy behind the conventions had ceased. These cessations, the precondition of new beginnings, are as significant in a causal consideration of art history as innovations, and are perhaps a more fruitful region for the kind of psychological exploration that Mr. Gay calls for. His discussion of Mondrian's inabilities and refusals carves closer to the heart of the paintings, for me at least, than his warm but somehow fluffy appreciation of Manet. But he succeeds everywhere in making us think simultaneously about history and art, and in simultaneously displaying learning and sensitivity.

—John Updike

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

Letter to a Child Never Born, by Oriana Fallaci, translated from the Italian by John Shepley (Simon & Schuster). This "novel" is an attempt at a general consideration of the state of motherhood from the point of view of a successful, single, Italian reporter—a worldly, cynical, independent, globe-trotting iconoclast. It is written in the form of a monologue addressed to the unborn child that the woman suddenly discovers she is carrying. The woman guesses that she is pregnant even before she goes for a test, and from

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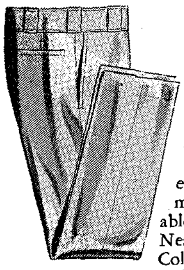

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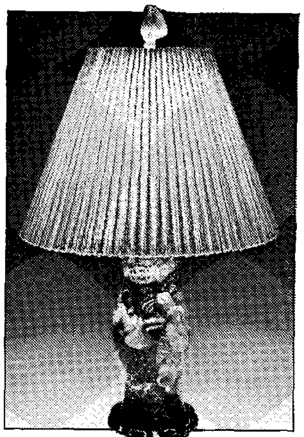

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the start is ambivalent about whether or not to have the baby. Will it cramp her style? Is this too ugly a world to bring a child into? Will she have to take her place in the doctor's office "with a lot of women with swollen bellies" with whom she has "nothing in common." Will a child offer more enduring emotions than romantic love, which, "once satisfied, leaves you with a kind of indigestion. A wish to vomit." For a while, the woman plans to keep the child. She rejects her lover's offer to help pay for an abortion, she pins a magazine picture of a developing fetus up on her wall, and she drops the news like a bomb on her boss, her druggist, and her tailor—all of whom react with varying degrees of piggishness. But when the pregnancy starts to become troublesome (she's told to stay in bed for a while), she decides that the child will have to accommodate to her life style, rather than vice versa, and it dies *in utero* while she is on a trip that her doctor has advised her against. A sad story but a wordy one, full of absurd generalizations, of posturing (the author casts herself alternately as Elektra and Peter Pan), and of bathetic self-ennoblement.

GENERAL

REACHING JUDGMENT AT NUREMBERG, by Bradley F. Smith (Basic Books). The author has had access to unpublished minutes and notes (primarily, it seems, the trial diaries kept by the senior American judge, Francis Biddle) on the deliberations of the judges at the Nuremberg Trials, and is able to tell us exactly how they arrived at their verdicts—why von Papen and Schacht were acquitted, for example, and why Albert Speer (who has publicly expressed his puzzlement at his sentence) was given twenty years instead of being hanged or let go. This, of course, is fascinating and revealing information, and it opens up new avenues of inquiry not only into Nuremberg—the morality and legality of which have bothered many people for thirty years—but into the entire question of the accountability for warmaking and the vexed question of "victor's justice." Mr. Smith analyzes the war-crimes proceedings from the London Charter of 1945, which set up the machinery and wrote the rules, to the final verdicts, and he concludes that despite all the horse trading that went on between

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the judges, and despite the sometimes exasperating, and even farcical, nature of their debates and quarrels, the tribunal answered some very hard questions "in a manner that gives the rest of us greater cause to hope than to fear."

VICTOR HUGO, by Joanna Richardson (St. Martin's). The author, an English specialist in nineteenth-century French literature, has written a very good and very useful biography, in which she disentangles all the Victor Hugos—the poet, the dramatist, the politician, the lover, and the cult figure. Her biography investigates the strengths and weaknesses of this prodigious fellow and explicates the power, and the ineptitude, of his work. Hugo's outstanding gift was his virtuosity in the use of language. When his talent was at the service of sincerity, he produced a small amount of truly great work; he also left quite a lot of technically interesting work (for poets to learn from and critics to dissect) and, finally, a lot of fustian that Miss Richardson—who is learned but not pedantic—candidly advises us to skip.

INTERVIEWS WITH WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS, edited, with an introduction, by Linda Welshimer Wagner (New Directions). For many years of obscurity, William Carlos Williams wrote simply because he had things to say. He did not acquire an audience until he was past fifty, he tells us in one of these interviews, and when, in his late sixties and seventies, he came to enjoy the status of an elder statesman of modern poetry, he could speak with the assurance of someone who had persisted despite adversity and indifference. To the students and reporters who called on him, he said what he thought, and he knew what he was saying. When he spoke in favor of something, it was not out of foolish personal loyalty or because someone had got his ear; it was because his opinion had been formed in a long period of solitude. He never trifled with his questioners, never treated them with less respect than he had for himself. His simple manners, his devotion to common people, and his love for the American idiom shine from these pages.

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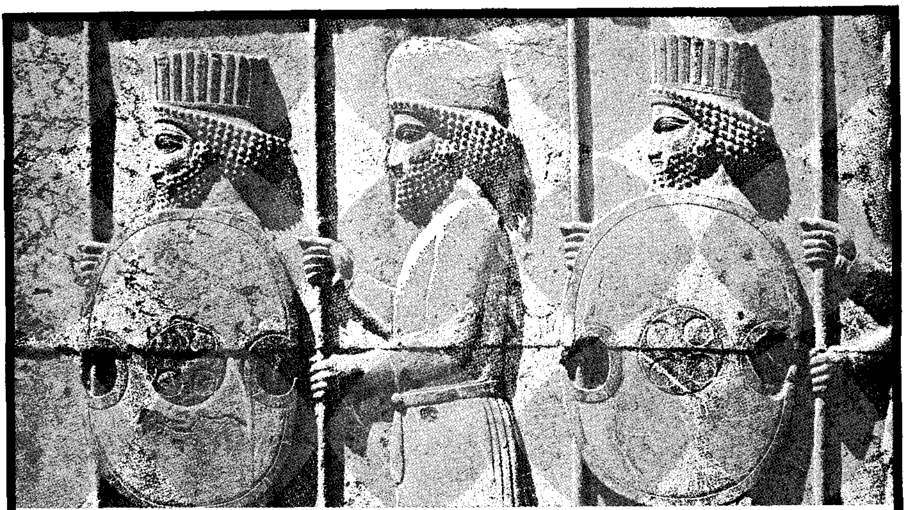
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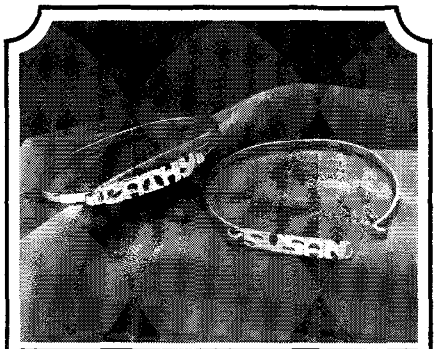
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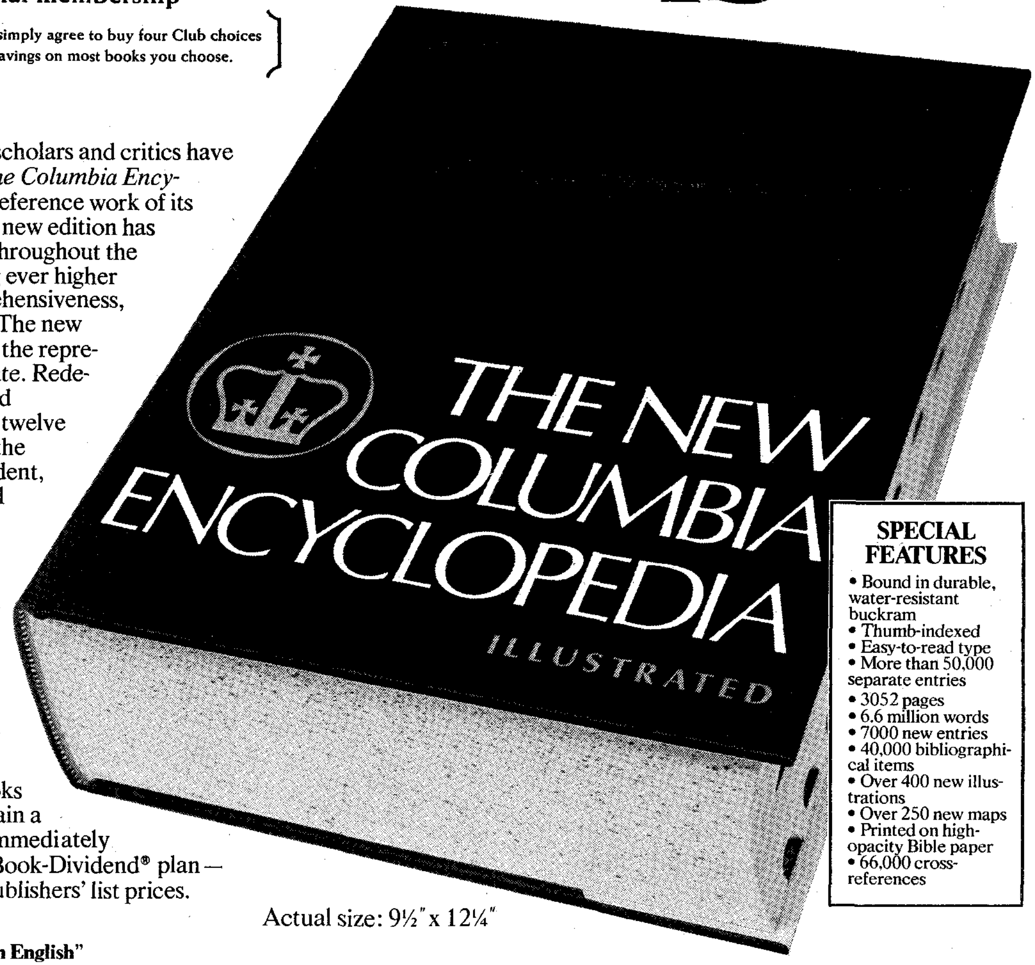

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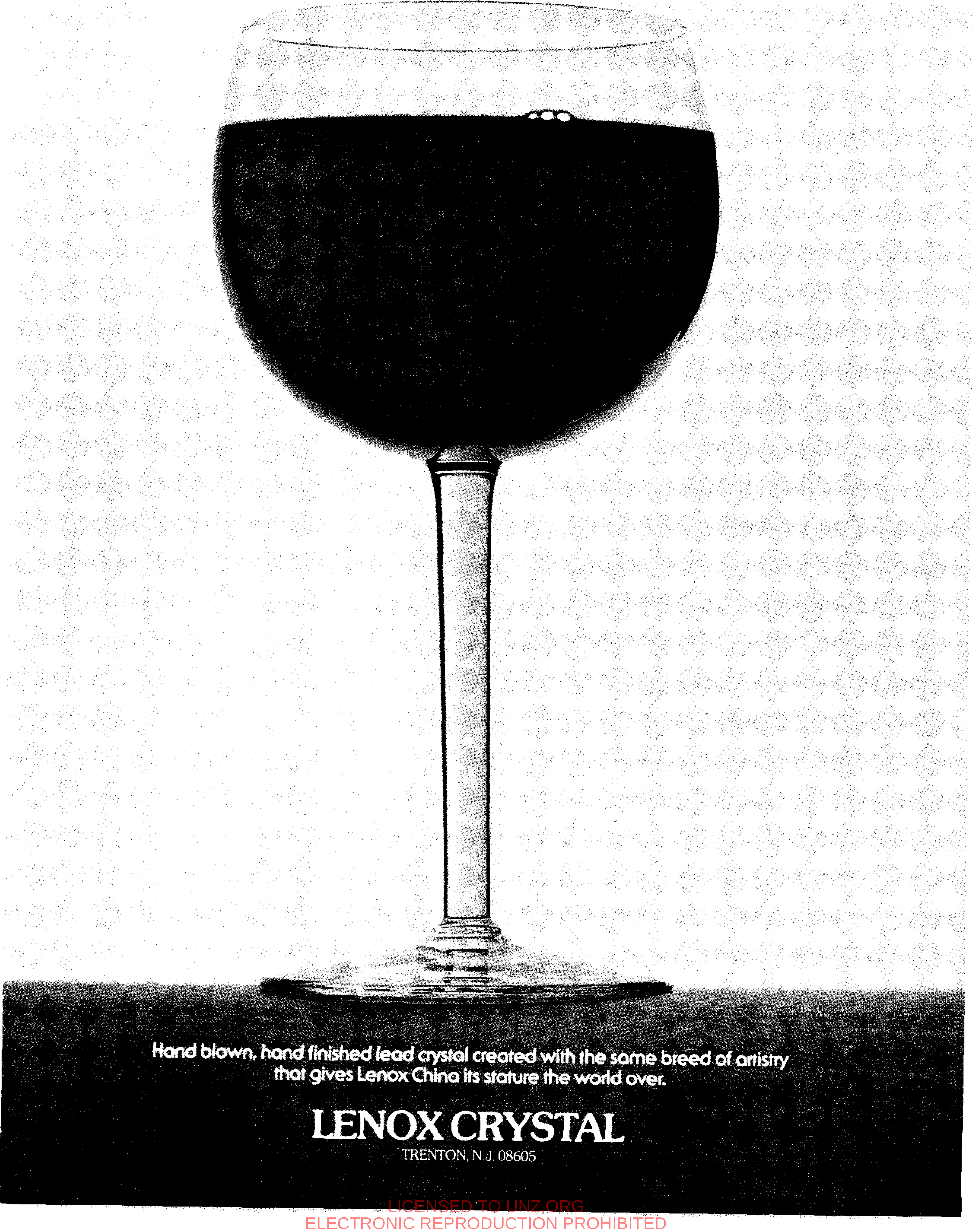

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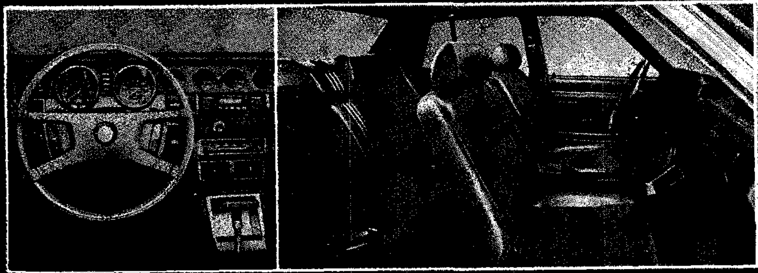

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